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S C A L A N T E

# JFK: THE CUBA FILES

THE UNTOLD STORY OF THE  
PLOT TO KILL KENNEDY

THE  
SECRET  
WAR

FABIÁN  
ESCALANTE



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PLOT TO KILL KENNEDY**

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**Fabián Escalante**



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## About the Author



FABIÁN ESCALANTE FONT was born in Havana, Cuba, in 1940. As a young political activist he suffered persecution and was imprisoned for his activities against the dictatorship of Fulgencio Batista. Following the 1959 Cuban revolution, he joined the newly created Department of State Security, where he carried out various activities against counter-revolutionary organizations and the Central Intelligence Agency of the United States, including the latter's Operation AM/LASH – a plan to assassinate Fidel Castro.

He directed the investigations that the Cuban government carried out at the request of the US Select Committee of the House of Representatives, when the investigation into the assassination of US President John F. Kennedy was reopened in 1978.

Fabián Escalante was a Division General of the Ministry of the Interior and between 1976 and 1982 was head of the State Security Department (G-2).

He is internationally recognized as an authority on the CIA and its operations in Cuba and Latin America.

To my father César, an exemplary communist; to Teresita,  
my “unmarriageable” and lifelong *compañera*; to Raúl and  
César, my children, and to little César, my nephew.

# Glossary

**Warren Commission:** Established by President Lyndon Johnson in 1963 under Chief Justice Earl Warren to investigate President John F. Kennedy's assassination.

**Church Commission or Senate Commission:** Appointed in 1975 and chaired by Senator Frank Church to Study US Governmental Operations with Respect to Intelligence Activities against foreign governments and political leaders.

**House Select Committee:** United States House of Representatives Select Committee (1976–78) to examine the assassinations of President Kennedy and Martin Luther King, Jr. Its final report was published in 1979.

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**AM/LASH** Refers to both the CIA covert operation to assassinate Fidel Castro and agent Rolando Cubela

**AM/TRUNK** CIA program to recruit agents within the Cuban armed forces

**AM/WHIP** Assumed to be agent Carlos Tepedino

**AP** Associated Press

**Assault Brigade 2506:** Bay of Pigs exile expeditionary force

**CDR** Committee for the Defense of the Revolution

**CIA** Central Intelligence Agency

**CPUSA** Communist Party of the United States of America

**CRC** Cuban Revolutionary Council

**DRE** Revolutionary Student Directorate

**DSE** Department of State Security  
**ELN** National Liberation Army  
**FAR** Revolutionary Armed Forces  
**FBI** Federal Bureau of Investigation  
**FEU** Federation of University Students  
**FPCC** Fair Play for Cuba Committee  
**FRD** Revolutionary Democratic Front  
**GRU** Main Intelligence Directorate (Soviet Union)  
**INRA** National Institute of Agrarian Reform  
**INS** Immigration and Naturalization Service  
**JGCE** Junta of the Cuban Government in Exile  
**JM/WAVE** CIA station in Miami  
**JURE** Revolutionary Junta in Exile  
**KGB** State Security Committee (Soviet Union)  
**MINFAR** Ministry of the Revolutionary Armed Forces  
**MININT** Ministry of the Interior  
**MIRR** Insurreccional Movement for the Recovery of the Revolution  
**MRP** Revolutionary Movement of the People  
**MRR** Movement for the Recovery of the Revolution  
**NATO** North Atlantic Treaty Organization  
**NSC** National Security Council  
**OAS** Organization of American States  
**RCA** Anticommunist Civic Resistance  
**SAS** Special Affairs Section  
**SGA** Special Group (Augmented) of the National Security Council  
**SIM** Military Intelligence Service  
**UPI** United Press International  
**USIA** US Information Agency  
**ZR/RIFLE** CIA assassination program against foreign political leaders,  
also referred to as "Executive Action"



## Introduction

On November 22, 1963, at the age of 22, I was head of a counterintelligence unit. The assassination of John F. Kennedy, the US president, had a deep impact on me, as was the case with all my *compañeros*, in spite of the fact that he was one of our fiercest adversaries.<sup>1</sup>

I particularly recall that day because we had a work meeting involving various case officers from our unit. We were discussing a US Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) operation called Sentinels of Liberty. Utilizing Luis Conte Agüero, a veteran politician from the prerevolutionary era — “the loudest voice in Oriente [province],” as he liked to call himself — a Miami-based radio station was bombarding the island with constant anti-Cuba diatribes intermingled with slogans promoting a counterrevolutionary organization that it had managed to assemble in certain areas of the country. It was a mass espionage operation based on the cooperation of listeners, who were urged to write to the address that Conte Agüero gave them. Those who fell into the trap were processed by CIA recruiters and within a short space of time received a letter of inconsequential, generally amorous content, but with a paragraph stating that the missive should be ironed. When an aspiring anticommunist did so, a message in secret writing appeared,

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1. Kennedy had ordered the Bay of Pigs invasion, authorized Operation Mongoose, decreed the economic blockade, and was responsible for thousands of subversive and bellicose actions of all kinds, whose consequences persist to this day.

## 2 JFK: The Cuba Files

affirming that he or she was now a CIA collaborator and giving initial instructions and a secure post office box address somewhere in the United States.

For our unit, 1963 had been a particularly complex year. The dismantling of the Anticommunist Civic Resistance (RCA) “front” was one of the first tasks we had to confront. Linked to naval intelligence at the US Guantánamo base, this group was preparing to launch an island-wide terrorist plot in March and to assassinate the Cuban prime minister, Fidel Castro.

Acts of terrorism, infiltrations, burials of arms caches on the coast, and a host of other activities were foiled by our inexperienced group of officers<sup>2</sup> comprising Section Q, which was responsible for confronting counterrevolutionary organizations and CIA agents who were attempting to destabilize Cuba and sow terror among the population.

It was probably “Alfredo,”<sup>3</sup> a young and talented *compañero*, who first heard the news of the assassination. Despite his youth, he was recognized as an ingenious and tenacious investigator. Other members of the unit included “Eddy,”<sup>4</sup> its youngest member, always ready with a joke; and “Elías”<sup>5</sup> from Santiago, who, according to everyone, “sang” when he talked; all of us are still bound by a close friendship today.

Alfredo would doubtless have heard it on the radio of our secretary, “Beba,” who was an incredibly fast typist, able to keep up with everything, including the news.

We all fell silent on hearing of the assassination; it was impossible to continue the meeting and we immersed ourselves in all kinds of conjecture. The following day Fidel appeared on television giving a detailed analysis of the assassination and we concluded that it was a case of accounts being settled over there.

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2. At that time, the operational section of which our unit was a part had five investigation bureaus involving up to 60 case officers.

3. Colonel Alberto Santana Martín (retired).

4. Colonel Giraldo Díaz (retired).

5. Lieutenant Colonel Rafael Soto Vázquez (retired).

It was not until some years later that the possible involvement of Cuban exiles in the Dallas shooting occurred to some of us in the unit.

In 1965, our same operational unit was investigating the involvement of Rolando Cubela Secades<sup>6</sup> in a conspiracy referred to as AM/LASH, directed by the CIA with the aim to assassinate Fidel Castro and effect a counterrevolutionary coup. One of the reports we had access to concerned a meeting in Madrid at the end of 1964 between Cubela and CIA agent Manuel Artime Buesa,<sup>7</sup> in which they agreed on the assassination of the Cuban leader in order to facilitate a mini-invasion by Artime's commandos, who were based in Central American camps. According to the plan, these commandos would occupy a beachhead in Cuba to create a pretext for intervention by the Organization of American States (OAS) and the United States.

Our source, who was close to Artime, mentioned that after the meeting the latter commented that a similar conspiracy in 1963 had failed due to indecisiveness on the part of Washington politicians and Desmond FitzGerald, then chief of the CIA Cuba section. The informant noted that the plot referred to by Artime had the same components as the one underway and had been paralyzed for reasons unknown to him at that time.

In early February 1966 this same agent [Juan Feliafel Canahan], who had infiltrated the CIA special missions groups in Miami and won Artime's confidence, took advantage of an act of terrorism on coastal installations near the city of Sagua la Grande in the former province of Las Villas to jump ship, reach the shore, and report on new aspects related to the Cubela-Artime conspiracy and its scheduled date of March 1966. Cuban state security chiefs decided to "operate" the case and detain those involved.

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6. Rolando Cubela Secades: a former soldier of the Rebel Army who had participated in the struggle against the Fulgencio Batista dictatorship and had risen to the rank of commander.

7. Manuel Artime Buesa: founder of the Movement for the Recovery of the Revolution (MRR).

Unfortunately, aspects of the 1963 assassination and invasion plan could not be clarified. The conspirators themselves did not know much and were merely the instruments of the plot, according to the information we had.

It was not until the 1975 publication of the report by the Church Commission,<sup>8</sup> which investigated CIA plans to assassinate foreign political leaders — including Fidel Castro — that we began to suspect that this 1963 AM/LASH conspiracy might have been linked to the Dallas shooting and that the “Cuban American Mechanism” of the CIA and the Mafia might also have been involved.

Three years later, in 1978, as the result of a visit to Cuba by various members of the US House of Representatives Select Committee<sup>9</sup> investigating the assassinations of President Kennedy and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., we were given the task of studying the files of counter-revolutionaries, terrorists, and émigrés. By that time, I was chief of the Department of State Security (DSE) and oversaw this investigation.

I vividly recall the interview Fidel granted that working group, which proved to be decisive in clarifying Cuba’s position in response to the lies and calumnies suggesting our government’s involvement in such an abhorrent crime.

Many years later, in 1993, free of the responsibilities I had held for more than 30 years in the security services and the Ministry of the Interior (MININT), I proposed the creation of a security studies center, both to preserve part of the history of the Cuban people’s struggle in defense of the revolution, and to utilize the resulting information in the political-ideological combat against new US campaigns and strategies. The MININT approved the idea.

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8. In 1975, Senator Frank Church headed a US Senate Committee (referred to here as the Church Commission) that investigated numerous CIA plans to assassinate foreign political leaders hostile to Washington’s policies.

9. This US House of Representatives Select Committee is referred to here as the House Select Committee.

This work allowed me to look at past struggles from a different angle and to reexamine the events of 1963 that led to the Dallas shooting. With my veteran *compañero*-in-arms, Colonel Arturo Rodríguez Mendoza (now deceased), I studied all the available material and publications, consulted with former agents and operatives, and investigated all the accessible documentation. It was an arduous task, in which I had the satisfaction of counting on a *compañero* with whom I had worked for more than 20 years and with whom, although he is no longer with us, I had the good fortune of sharing numerous combats, emotions, and adventures.

The two of us participated in two seminars on the theme, one organized by Brazilian journalist Claudia Furiati in Rio de Janeiro, and another in Nassau, Bahamas, sponsored by various US nongovernmental organizations, including the National Security Archive. In both of them I defended the arguments that I have laid out in this book.

Rereading old notes from 40 years ago, I cannot avoid feeling overwhelmed by emotion. Many of our *compañeros*, agents, and officers have died in combat in unknown places; nevertheless, the struggle continues. An example is that of Gerardo, Antonio, Fernando, René, and Ramón,<sup>10</sup> who, from US jails, are continuing the struggle against the state terrorism to which our nation has been subjected for more than four decades. This account is a tribute to these five Cuban heroes, who are combating the empire in difficult conditions and offering us a formidable example of patriotism, loyalty, and honor.

In addition to the subversive and terrorist activities undertaken by the United States in 1963, we also reviewed the conspiracy to assassinate

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10. In 1998 these five Cubans living in Miami were arrested and charged with espionage offences. They had been monitoring terrorist groups operating out of Florida with the aim of preventing attacks on Cuba. They were convicted and are currently serving long sentences — one of them was given two life sentences plus 15 years. Their story is told in *Letters of Love and Hope: The Story of the Cuban Five*, (Melbourne & New York: Ocean Press, 2005).

Kennedy. This was not a new undertaking, as I have already explained. I am aware that the same lacunae remain in the information and the essential aspects are still concealed. My goal, therefore, is not to reveal the murky corners of the conspiracy, to which we never had access, but to recount what has been uncovered by our research, with the intention of coming a little closer to the nub of the conspiracy and offering elements that could be utilized by people with greater possibilities to navigate the labyrinth intentionally created by the assassins, who were entrenched within the US establishment itself.

It should also be borne in mind that, given my retirement, I do not have access to any documentation, so the sources available to me today are essentially the recollections of someone who at one point was involved in this research. What I have written here is therefore my responsibility alone.

*Fabián Escalante*

## **Part One**

# **The War against Cuba**





## Antecedents of a Conspiracy

The conflict between Cuba and the United States has its historical origin in persistent US attempts over more than two centuries to seize the island. Without a doubt, the revolutionary triumph of January 1, 1959, challenged US hegemony on the continent, by liberating Cuba from the neocolonial system to which it was subjected by its powerful neighbor to the North.

From the beginning, the United States viewed the new Cuban regime with suspicion. A CIA report dated January 13, 1959, noted:

Castro was in contact with vanguard communist groups during his university days and there are constant reports of a possible communist affiliation on the part of his highest leaders. However, at this point, there is no certainty that Castro is a communist...

Castro would appear to be a nationalist and something of a socialist and although he has alleged and criticized US support for Batista, it cannot be said that he is personally hostile to the United States...

Roy Rubottom, assistant to the undersecretary of state for hemispheric affairs, was far more explicit in his description of relations between the two countries when some time later he stated:

The period from January to March (1959) can be characterized as the honeymoon with the Castro government. In April, a downward turn in relations became evident... In June we had taken the decision that it was not possible to achieve our objectives with Castro in power and agreed to undertake the program referred to by Mr. Marchant.

In July and August we had been drawing up a program to replace Castro. However, certain companies in the United States informed us during that period that they were achieving some progress in negotiations, a factor that led to a delay in the implementation of our program. The hopes expressed by these companies did not materialize. October was a period of clarification. On October 31, in agreement with the CIA, the department suggested that the president should approve a program in line with Mr. Marchant's. The approved program authorized us to support elements in Cuba opposed to the Castro government, while it was planned that Castro's fall would be seen as the result of his own errors...

As if to dispatch any possible doubt, former president Dwight Eisenhower recalled: "In a matter of weeks after Castro entered Havana, we in the government began to examine measures that could be effective in controlling Castro."

Washington's concerns became clearer during that period. Two tendencies emerged within the State Department and the CIA: those who were suspicious of the revolutionaries' leftist tendencies and proposed an immediate defeat of the revolution; and others who were confident that the friends of the United States within the first cabinet headed by Manuel Urrutia<sup>1</sup> would impose a more conservative political line. The triumph of the revolutionary wing, expressed in the economic, political, and social measures implemented from the outset, frustrated any reformist tendency.

The electricity and telephone companies were nationalized and charges for those services reduced; house rentals were cut by 50 percent. A National Savings and Housing Institute was established, instigating a huge housing construction program throughout the country. The budget for the presidential palace, to that point set at almost five million pesos,

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1. Manuel Urrutia Lleó: a magistrate from the Supreme Court of Justice who, because of his ethical and moral position, was appointed president after the revolution.

was reduced to 1.2 million pesos per annum. The Council of Ministers approved credits for the immediate construction of 5,000 classrooms and 200 schools, the price of text books was reduced by 25 to 30 percent, and a university city was founded in the former province of Oriente. The price of medicine was cut by 15 to 20 percent. The Reforestation Department was created with the aim of conserving, protecting, and developing the nation's forest heritage, a plan for the rehabilitation of minors was organized, and various anti-vice and anti-corruption campaigns were launched. Finally, the Agrarian Reform Act came into force. More than 100,000 land titles were granted to campesinos, while the government committed itself to compensating the former owners with bonds redeemable over a period of 20 years at a 4.5 percent interest rate. Begging, prostitution, gambling, and drugs abruptly halted their ascending spiral and began to decrease. It was evident even to the most superficial observers that they would be eradicated within a short space of time.

At the end of 1959, *Bohemia* magazine, with the largest circulation in the country, reported that Fidel Castro's popularity rate among the Cuban population was 90.2 percent. The revolution's prestige and authority were so strong that the people were drawn into it, and developed a capacity for resistance that still characterizes Cuban politics today.

In December 1959, Colonel J.C. King, chief of the CIA's Western Hemisphere Division, recommended the assassination of Fidel Castro as the most expeditious way to bring down the Cuban government. A few months later, in March 1960, President Eisenhower gave the go-ahead to a project codenamed Pluto, setting in motion a vast covert operation to overthrow the Cuban government. It had four main objectives: to organize a "responsible" political opposition from abroad to unite the émigré community, which would formally direct the planned aggression; to unleash a campaign of psychological warfare spearheaded by a powerful radio station with the aim of destabilizing the Cuban population; to train paramilitary cadres in foreign bases who would be responsible for organizing the internal resistance; and to create a powerful underground organization within the country to bring down the regime.

Within a few months, the project began to founder because of its weak internal base. So, in November 1960, the plans were changed and it was decided to create a landing and assault brigade as the vanguard of an invasion of Cuba, as the CIA was convinced of the need for the involvement of the US armed forces.

Meanwhile, at the end of 1960, John F. Kennedy defeated Republican candidate Richard Nixon in a hard-fought election battle. The issue of Cuba was not absent from the campaign debates: aware of the aggressive plans approved by the Eisenhower administration, Kennedy publicly attacked his adversary by charging him with inertia over the communist regime in Havana, knowing that Nixon could say nothing without revealing the secret US invasion plan.

On November 18, a few days after his election, Kennedy was officially informed of those plans by CIA chiefs Allen Dulles and Richard Bissell. On assuming the presidency in January 1961, Kennedy took charge of the operation against Cuba, and approved the landing of the exiled Cuban brigade. The invasion occurred on April 17 of that year and was defeated in less than 72 hours by the Cuban Revolutionary Armed Forces (FAR).

This failure divided opinions and provoked a split between the new administration and important circles of power in Washington. On the one hand, Kennedy took responsibility for the defeat, and on the other, he blamed the CIA for having embarked upon an unsuccessful adventure. He appointed an investigative commission headed by General Maxwell Taylor to identify the reasons and those responsible for the debacle. Meanwhile, the CIA and its allies in the Mafia and the counter-revolutionary émigré community were convinced that the president was centrally responsible, arguing that he had not offered the necessary air and military support to the exile brigade.

In fact, both sides were trying to conceal the truth. The Assault Brigade 2506 that attacked Cuba was not defeated because of poor CIA planning or a lack of air support. The problem was that, from the beginning, the US rulers were unable to comprehend the profound transformation triggered by the revolution, which had galvanized the

broad popular masses. This was the reason for the Cuban victory.

The defeat led to great bitterness among the conspirators. Years later, David Atlee Phillips, one of the CIA operatives in that adventure, described in his memoir (*The Night Watch*) the shock he felt when he heard over the radio that the Cuban troops had captured the last counter-revolutionary forces:

Helen attempted to fix me something to eat, but I couldn't. I took a portable radio out on to the patio of the house where I heard the terrible news about Cuba... Helen brought me a large martini. I was half drunk by the time I'd finished it. Suddenly my stomach was churning. I felt nauseous. Then I began to cry... I cried for two hours, felt nauseous again, I was drunk...

Kennedy reacted angrily and placed his brother Robert at the head of a special group within the National Security Council (NSC) that would direct the war against Cuba in the future. He appointed General Edward Lansdale, a counterinsurgency specialist, as chief of general staff of Operation Mongoose, the codename for a new anti-Cuba operation that would become the largest covert action program undertaken by the United States to that date. It involved unleashing, or rather, promoting a civil war within Cuba.

Documents recently declassified in the United States demonstrate the goals. One of these, Project Cuba, which attempted to summarize the strategy drawn up by the NSC, noted:

Basically, the operation is to bring about the revolt of the Cuban people...

The revolt requires a strongly motivated political action movement established within Cuba, to generate the revolt, to give it direction towards the object, and to capitalize on the climactic moment. The political actions will be assisted by economic warfare to induce failure of the communist regime to supply Cuba's economic needs, psychological operations to turn the peoples' resentment increasingly against the regime, and military-type groups to give the popular movement an action arm for sabotage and armed resistance in support of political objectives...

The preparation phase must result in a political action organization being in key locations of the island, with its own means of internal communications, its own voice for psychological operations, and its own action arm (small guerrilla bands, sabotage squads, etc.). It must have the sympathetic support of the majority of the Cuban people, and make this fact known to the outside world.

The climactic moment of revolt will come from an angry reaction of the people to a government action (sparked by an incident), or from a fracturing of the leadership cadre within the regime, or both... The popular movement will capitalize on this climactic moment by initiating an open revolt. Areas will be taken and held. If necessary, the popular movement will appeal for help to the free nations of the Western Hemisphere. The United States, if possible in concert with other Western Hemisphere nations, will then give open support to the Cuban peoples' revolt. Such support will include military force, as necessary.<sup>2</sup>

The project included a schedule of activities commencing in March and concluding in October 1962, when "the necessary military support" would, according to the plans, seal the fate of the revolution. Once more the plan foundered. The popular movement that was a precondition for its success never materialized and the revolutionary response of the masses brought about the defeat of Operation Mongoose.

In October 1962, the United States discovered the presence of Soviet missiles in Cuba. This resulted in the so-called October Missile Crisis that ended with the removal of those armaments from the island and the tacit commitment of the United States not to attack it militarily.

At that point, when the world was shaken by the danger of a nuclear holocaust, and in violation of government orders to suspend any operation underway, the CIA infiltrated a team of men into Cuba headed by the chief of its special missions groups. Its objective was to sabotage a large mining installation in Pinar del Río province, thus fuelling the conflict. At the same time, another mercenary group would attack Puerto

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2. General Lansdale's review of Operation Mongoose, dated January 18, 1962.

Cabezas, Nicaragua, in order to claim a regional communist expansion. Meanwhile, Cayo Coco on the northern coast of Cuba was to be taken militarily to provide a base from which a provisional government would call for a US military intervention. That team of terrorists was captured and their own statements revealed the operation's objectives. The CIA had unintentionally delivered the coup de grace to Mongoose, and some weeks later, towards the end of 1962, came the executive order to deactivate it. Thus the flames of the October Missile Crisis culminated in the defeat of the US covert operation to unleash a civil war. The internal counterrevolution was defeated and disbanded.

The sense of frustration that had overwhelmed the Cuban exiles, their CIA bosses, and the Mafia in the wake of the Bay of Pigs defeat took on a new dimension; Kennedy was now seen as a traitor to US interests, incapable of fighting his enemies.

In reality, the US president was pursuing the same strategic objective of defeating the Cuban regime, but along a different path. Convinced that military aggression would result in the US Army getting bogged down in a long and costly war — as was subsequently the case in Vietnam — he directed a new “twin-track” strategy in early 1963 which established two lines of action. The first was to intensify the political and economic blockade and subversive actions aimed at destroying the country's industrial potential, and the second, to force Cuba to negotiate once it was significantly weakened.

Kennedy was aware of the profound contradictions that had emerged between the Soviet Union and Cuba during the October Missile Crisis, when the Kremlin initiated talks with the United States without taking into account the position of the Cuban government. The final breakdown of those negotiations and the subsequent escalation of US subversive activity against Cuba were the direct result of Soviet errors.

Thus, “extracting Castro from the embrace of the Russian bear,” as the Washington strategists described it, was the basis of the new policy that the administration began to develop, in which Kennedy-style pragmatism allowed, to some extent, setting aside the humiliations suffered in past defeats.

## Exiles, Mafiosi, and Spies

From early January 1959, venal officials, torturers, and killers from the Batista regime fled Cuba and sought refuge in the United States in order to evade revolutionary justice. Thus a new political exile structure came into being that immediately began to organize itself into various groups, all hoping to regain power. They were not alone in their undertakings and would soon be aided by powerful allies, including the Mafia (especially the owners of the former Havana casinos), the CIA, and the US State Department.

Money began to flow, and within a few weeks, with the backing of the new émigrés, various exile organizations began to sprout up, headed by La Rosa Blanca (The White Rose), which brought together the majority of Batista's men who, in league with the Dominican dictator Rafael Leónidas Trujillo, were training a mercenary army in the Dominican Republic to invade Cuba.

The radicalization of the revolutionary process, the highest point of which was the promulgation of the Agrarian Reform Act on May 17, 1959, and the collapse of the Batista-Trujillo attempted coup a few months later stimulated a new wave of emigration, this time among those from the middle and petit bourgeoisie who had initially supported the revolution, but who now perceived a threat to their economic interests. They joined the old political class, which had organized itself rapidly in the United States, so that the anti-Castro opposition now presented an image less identified with the discredited Batista dictatorship.



The counterrevolution thus represented an unnatural alliance where former torturers joined hands with their past victims. Their standard was a rabid anticommunism linked to deep conservative and reactionary convictions. Those groups or individuals suspected of social-democratic and liberal ideas were rejected. The Revolutionary Democratic Front (FRD) was the first attempt by the CIA and the State Department, in line with President Eisenhower's instructions, to organize "a responsible political opposition" as an alternative to Fidel Castro's government. The FRD's composition was complex, reflecting the distinct currents of the exile community. Its leaders were Manuel Antonio (Tony) de Varona,<sup>1</sup> a Mafia associate, who represented the Rescate group of followers of ex-president Carlos Prío Socarrás;<sup>2</sup> Manuel Artime, founder of the Movement for the Recovery of the Revolution (MRR) and leader of the Catholic youth sector; Aureliano Sánchez Arango, former Cuban minister and veteran politician, representing a wing of the Authentic Party called the Triple A; José Ignacio Rasco, leader of the Christian Democrat Movement, representing the senior Catholic hierarchy; and Justo Carrillo, another old politician, head of a small group mostly composed of his relatives called the Montecristi Group. Batista's men were thus displaced, but kept in reserve for commanding the projected army.

Howard Hunt, one of the CIA officers who engendered this monster, stated in his autobiography *Give Us This Day* that his organization initially handed over \$100,000-plus per month to the FRD, a figure that soon became \$3 million a year. The spirit of the new exile organization had its clearest expression in the words of Justo Carrillo, one of its founders:

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1. Manuel Antonio de Varona: vice-president in Prío's government and leader of a counterrevolutionary organization called Rescate. One of the leaders of the Assault Brigade 2506.
  2. Carlos Prío Socarrás: president of Cuba from 1948–52, leader of the Cuban Revolutionary Party (known as the *Autenticos*).

I could deduce from the first meetings of the FRD that, apart from certain speeches by Aureliano Sánchez, the predominant criterion was in the style of the old Cuban political mold, with absolutely no understanding of the sociological phenomenon that was developing in Cuba; typically counterrevolutionary, the attitude was that the revolutionary legislation would be revoked as soon as possible.

Nevertheless, the FRD, like its successor, the Cuban Revolutionary Council (CRC), were conceived by the CIA to act as a government-in-waiting, created as window-dressing to conceal a covert operation that consisted of an invasion by a small exile army to coincide with an uprising by a “fifth column” the CIA believed it had created on the island.

Much has been written about the dimensions of this invasion plan: the failure of the “fifth column,” and the lack of US air support — both factors pointed to by many exiles as reasons for the debacle at the Bay of Pigs. In reality, they were all just rationalizations: from an operational point of view, the idea was well conceived, the weapons and men were sufficient, the diplomatic and media coverage was optimum, and the training and arming of the underground groups adequate; they merely failed to reckon with the Cuban people, who were the fundamental actors in the defeat. If Fidel Castro had had one hundredth of that military force, the war against Batista would doubtless have ended in a matter of days.

However, the vast subversive operation began to deliver large dividends from the outset. The weapons and military provisions were supplied by inexhaustible clandestine arsenals controlled by the Mafia. The planes carrying these and other supplies from the United States to Central America returned loaded with the most diverse goods, from whiskey to all kinds of narcotics, which were then unloaded at US military airports and sold through a new network of mafiosi, CIA officers, and exiled Cubans, who quickly enriched themselves through the dirty war against Cuba. These were the same individuals who had already shared out the posts in the new government to be created when Fidel was overthrown — those who had sold the assets of the casinos they

previously owned in Cuba, who planned to take back the campesinos' land, who contracted large purchases of gambling machines for the promised future — those who, in effect, wanted to turn back the clock of Cuban history.

That network gave birth to a creature that we have called the "Cuban American Mechanism" of the CIA and the Mafia, which, having assumed a life of its own after the Bay of Pigs defeat, held President John F. Kennedy responsible for that debacle, and which, from that point, would have a prominent role in US political life.

Those interested in seizing back Cuba were not only representatives of US monopoly capital and past and present governments; other interests also came together in this pursuit. There is evidence of US-based organized crime operating in Cuba dating back to the 1920s, when Cuban sugar was used for the illicit distilling of alcoholic beverages, a lucrative business that resulted in vast fortunes. Later, during the 1940s, Salvatore Lucania (or Lucky Luciano as "the capo of all capos" was known) established himself in Havana to direct his business in the United States from the island. However, it was not until Batista's coup d'état in 1952 that the mafiosi were able to convert Cuba into an organized gambling emporium. Meyer Lansky, Santos Trafficante, Jr., and a legion of gamblers and criminals from all over the United States arrived in Cuba to implement their plans. New hotels, casinos, brothels, and other such institutions opened their doors under the dictatorship's complicit regard. The drug trade experienced an unprecedented boom. When the revolution took place, Havana was a paradise of corruption; the profits from the Hotel Riviera casino alone reached the figure of \$1 million in 1958.

Thus the mafiosi received a harsh blow when the revolution closed down their casinos, initiated an anticorruption program, and detained and expelled all their representatives from Cuba. For that reason, the capos of the principal families involved in organized crime were among the first to oppose the revolution. They soon joined forces with the CIA — with which they had had former dealings "in the interest of national security" — in order to overthrow the Cuban government. Various

of their close associates, including Batista, ex-president Carlos Prío, Antonio Varona, Rolando Masferrer Rojas,<sup>3</sup> and other leaders of the exile groups all received large sums of money for counterrevolutionary activities.

Later, when the imperative of assassinating Fidel Castro emerged as the “most expeditious means of overthrowing the Cuban government,” both the exiles and their CIA chiefs had recourse to the Mafia for contracts on the life of the Cuban leader.

Cuban archives contain voluminous information on the conspiracies to assassinate Fidel Castro. Among the earliest was the attempt in March 1959, when Batista, Trujillo, and a group of counterrevolutionaries solicited Meyer Lansky’s aid. Later, in November of that year, acting on Chicago capo Sam Giancana’s orders, Mafia member Richard Cain traveled to Havana to check out ways of eliminating the Cuban leader. In early 1960, assassination plans of CIA agents operating out of the US embassy in Havana were exposed. A few months later, the CIA contracted the services of John Roselli, one of the most notorious gangsters of the Chicago Mafia, and incorporated him into the ZR/RIFLE project, an official political assassination operation organized within the Agency. Bombs, high-precision rifles, powerful poisons, aerial attacks, an entire arsenal was pressed into this enterprise. The obsession of overthrowing the revolutionary government and assassinating Fidel Castro sealed an alliance that became very tight over the years. In its own right, the Mafia came to be part of the CIA’s “Cuban American Mechanism.”

The CIA suffered similar heavy losses with the triumph of the Cuban revolution to those of the Mafia. Batista’s Havana had been a safe operational base for the CIA’s Western Hemisphere operations. Howard Hunt reflects the general sentiment in his memoirs:

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3. Rolando Masferrer Rojas: politician in the prerevolutionary period who organized the so-called Tiger death squads under General Fulgencio Batista and was responsible for hundreds of killings among the civilian population, principally in the eastern Cuban provinces.

Twenty of us were seated around the spacious office of the Honorable Arthur Gardner, US ambassador to Cuba. Through the high windows we could look out to sea and see the yachts and fishing boats rocking in the Caribbean. Below, on the Havana Malecón, the latest-model cars moved rapidly among the tourists who passed by in their bright-colored vacation wear. The air was cold on that morning in December 1956, but the sun was brilliant and many of us wanted to spend the afternoon taking a dip at the Marianao beaches.

With the exception of Ambassador Gardner, we were all CIA officers, officials from general headquarters, or station heads in Latin America and the Caribbean. For three days we had been participating in a regional meeting, whose annual venue was selected on the basis of accessibility, as well as the absence of communist embassies. Our annual meeting had concluded and we were invited to attend a function with the ambassador.

Our division chief, Colonel J.C. King, was outlining the CIA point of view to the ambassador when an embassy aide entered and whispered something to him. As he left, Gardner told us that President Batista had informed him that a boat full of revolutionaries had been sunk off Oriente province and that the survivors were being pursued by the army and air force. The leader of the band was the former agitator Fidel Castro, who was apparently among the dead.

Turning to King, Gardner said: "That name's familiar... wasn't Castro involved in the Bogotá uprising?"

"Heavily involved," affirmed King. "The famous Bogotazo..."

The following day when we returned separately to our respective stations... I read a brief report in a Havana newspaper... Of the 83 men only 16 survived, but they proved capable of overthrowing Batista and making Cuba the first Soviet satellite in the Northern Hemisphere...

There was a powerful CIA station in Cuba under the command of William Caldwell, an experienced officer who had previously operated in Chile. Many covert agents were placed in important positions in the government and private enterprise, from which they reported on political developments in Cuba. The most notable was David A. Phillips, a

disinformation and propaganda expert, who went on to play a crucial role in the war against Cuba over the years.

When it had become evident to observers in Washington that the Batista government was faltering, Allen Dulles sent Lyman Kirkpatrick, his inspector general, to the island to advise the dictator to leave and to appoint a provisional government of persons selected by the CIA, thereby hoping to neutralize Fidel Castro's movement. The CIA and its local agents had been working on such a plan since 1957. Immediately after the triumph of January 1, 1959, they tried unsuccessfully to influence the revolutionary process.

Among the CIA officers in Havana was one person well known to the Cuban security services: David Sánchez Morales, who, some years later, would also play a key part in the anti-Cuba operation. At that time he was the officer who attended to Phillips and handled covert agents Frank Fiorini (Frank Sturgis) and Gerry Patrick Hemming, two soldiers of fortune infiltrated into the revolutionary air force who would later become the leaders of paramilitary groups in Florida directed by the CIA.

The operational history of the CIA station in Havana up until January 1961, when the United States broke off diplomatic relations with Cuba, was a disaster. Even when the chief was replaced by a more competent man, James Noel, its officers were caught in the act on various occasions. In January, the subversive activities of Major Robert Van Horne, military attaché at the US embassy, were exposed by Cuban agents who uncovered and dismantled a vast operation whose objectives included the assassination of Fidel Castro. In June, "diplomats" Edwin L. Sweet and William G. Friedman were arrested while directing a counterrevolutionary meeting, and a few months later, in September, three spies of US origin, one covert agent, and Marjorie Lennox, a secretary at the US embassy in Havana, were captured attempting to place hidden microphones in an apartment to be occupied by the Chinese news agency Xinhua.

During this period, all kinds of interests and individuals coalesced in Havana, including prominent figures in organized crime, transnational businesses, and espionage. Many of these groups and individuals were subsequently linked with counterrevolutionary projects to assassinate Fidel Castro, and also became part of what we have called the CIA and Mafia's "Cuban American Mechanism."

# The Central Intelligence Agency

Immediately after the October Missile Crisis, towards the end of 1962, the Special Group (Augmented) (SGA) of the NSC decided to discontinue Operation Mongoose, the plan that had attempted to stir a civil war in Cuba for almost a year. Its final action, and Operation Cupid, initiated with the infiltration of Miguel A. Orozco,<sup>1</sup> had failed resoundingly with the capture of its main leaders and military equipment.

The budget allocated to this US secret war in 1962 was approximately \$100 million, which funded more than 505 enterprises to provide the necessary cover for the operation: real estate agencies, air and maritime companies, car hire companies, banks, supply stores, markets, and pharmacies. Many of the managers of these businesses quickly amassed significant fortunes by manipulating budgets they did not have to account for.

At the same time, the command structure of the anti-Cuba operation was being reorganized. Just as the failure of the Bay of Pigs led to the dismissal of the main CIA chiefs, in this case William Harvey, head of the Task Force W and ZR/RIFLE projects, was packed off to a comfortable retirement post in the CIA station in Rome. This time the reorganization was comprehensive. A new division was created within the Domestic Affairs Division so that “the Cuba issue” was now an internal US policy matter. Desmond FitzGerald, who had been chief of the CIA station in

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1. Miguel A. Orozco Crespo was chief of the CIA special missions groups when he was detained in December 1962.



India, was appointed head of the Special Affairs Section (SAS), while the veteran Tracy Barnes, a protégé of director of operations Richard Helms, became division chief.

This massive Miami operational base was known as JM/WAVE, located near the local university under the cover of Zenith Technical Enterprises Inc., with 400 case officers and around 4,000 Cuban agents.

Army Captain Bradley Earl Ayers, who was in charge of training the commandos, recalled some years later:

I saw that they had missed no detail setting up the false front of Zenith Technical Enterprises. There were phony sales and production charts on the walls and business licenses from the state and federal governments. A notice to salesmen, pinned near the door, advised them of the calling hours for various departments. The crowning touch was a certificate of award from the United Givers' Fund to Zenith for outstanding participation in its annual fund drive.<sup>2</sup>

The organization of the base included various sections, each one with a specific task. Significant sections included maritime, in charge of vessels, infiltration groups, tugs, shipping yards, etc.; operations, responsible for planning actions within and outside of Cuba; the air division, which controlled the fleet of small and medium aircraft, their airports, repair bases, and everything needed in that context; and logistics, which supplied all the operatives and managed the front company, fabricating the necessary false documents. Obviously, the most important of these sections were operations and logistics, because it was there that investments and their beneficiaries were determined. From these investments great fortunes were made, and Miami-Dade County flourished.

Within this extensive and elaborate operation the Mafia exercised control sometimes as an executive and others as a secure and discreet supplier. John Roselli, second-in-command of the Chicago "family," represented the interests of organized crime, which hoped to regain

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2. William Turner and Warren Hinckle, *The Fish is Red*, (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1981), 128.

control of the casinos, narcotics, and prostitution businesses they had previously run in Havana. Mafia networks extended throughout the United States, its capos controlling the trafficking of arms, alcohol, cocaine, and even blood plasma, brought into the United States in aircraft belonging to the CIA itself.

Two CIA stations were key in this new destabilization strategy: one in Mexico City and the other in Madrid. The former was headed by veteran spy David Phillips and the latter by James Noel, the last CIA station chief in Havana prior to the breaking of diplomatic relations.

The Cuban exile community, split into hundreds of groups all hoping to return to the island under the cover of the US Marines, was again reorganized within the CRC, headed by José Miró Cardona and Antonio Varona who, under instructions from CIA officers, frequently traveled to Washington to meet with US dignitaries.

By this time, hundreds of Cubans had been recruited by the US military forces and were being trained in various camps to form the elite units that one day — so it was thought — would head the “liberating crusade” against their own homeland.

A repressive police and intelligence apparatus completed the structure. This was Operation 40, formed in the heat of the Bay of Pigs invasion to “cleanse” the communists from the locations the invaders would capture. Fortunately, they had been unable to disembark and fled when they saw what was happening on the beach. This idea is explained by Lyman Kirkpatrick, CIA inspector general, in his report on the Bay of Pigs:

...In selective ways the FRD proved to be a responsive and useful instrument. An example of this was the counterintelligence and security service which, under close project control, developed into an efficient and valuable unit in support of the FRD, Miami Base, and the project program.

By mid-March 1961 this security organization comprised 86 employees of whom 37 were trainee case officers, the service having

graduated four classes from its own training center, whose chief instructor was a [Censored]<sup>3</sup> police officer.

“Illustrious” members of this conclave included Orlando Piedra, Joaquín Sanjenís, Bernard Barker, the brothers Guillermo and Ignacio Novo Sampol, Armando López Estrada, José Dionisio Suárez, Félix Rodríguez Mendigutía, Gustavo Villoldo, Luis Posada Carriles, and many others who, over more than 40 years, have been responsible for acts of terrorism against Cuba perpetrated by the United States.

Then there were the paramilitaries or soldiers of fortune, mercenaries who acted as freelancers circling their potential victim like vultures. Organizations like Gerry Patrick Hemming’s Interpen and Frank Sturgis’s International Anticommunist Brigade offered their services unconditionally to this new stage of the secret war, in exchange for a fat pay check.

Finally, organizations created by private citizens “interested in Cuba’s freedom” popped up in various US cities seeking additional and illegal funds for the huge costs of both the war and the political lobby in Washington. In his native Texas, George Bush, Sr., was one of those “outstanding” Americans, along with Admiral Arleigh Burke and his US Committee for a Free Cuba, and the influential Friends of Democratic Cuba, run by the Mafia from New Orleans. These were just some of the most influential groups.

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3. [Censored] indicates where information was deleted from the report.

## The Exiles

By 1963, a conglomerate of counterrevolutionary organizations was based in the southern United States, particularly in Miami, New Orleans, and Dallas. They formed the reserve from which the CIA selected the groups that it would utilize for the new strategy of autonomous operations. Their mission would be to represent a “militant and independent” current within the émigré community, not bound by the Agency’s official brief. It should be recalled that the operational philosophy at that time was to decide the objectives of attack, supply the necessary resources, and control the results. The means utilized and the cost were immaterial.

Excerpts from a document declassified by the CIA clarify the nature of such operations: “the covert action program approved by the highest authority in June 1963 grants support to autonomous anti-Castro groups for aid and assistance in the liberation of Cuba.”

Various rules were incorporated into the manual<sup>1</sup> regulating relations between the CIA and these groups, among which the following are notable:

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1. *Manual of Regulations for Autonomous Operations*: a document declassified by the US government and handed over to the Cuban delegation that participated in the “Playa Girón, 40 Years On” conference of the National Security Archive.

These autonomous operations shall be exclusively executed by Cuban nationals, motivated by conviction... the effort will probably cost many Cuban lives... The US government must be prepared to publicly deny any participation in these actions... The assigned officer will give general information (to the group) and the necessary material support. He should influence but not control the course of the operations...

It was within this framework that the exile community was reorganized. Where the exiles had previously provided cannon fodder for the Assault Brigade 2506 and been an instrument for fomenting civil war in Cuba, by 1963 they became an integral mechanism of state terrorism and drug trafficking in the service of the anti-Cuba project and US organized crime.

This was the birth of “the Miami Cuban mafia.” No longer a disposable instrument of anti-Cuba plots, it now acquired a voice and a vote and resources for which it was unaccountable. And the “enterprising businessmen,” professionals in dirty warfare, reaped extraordinary financial benefits, as time would show.

Some groups developed specialized tasks, depending on their vocation and experience. A number of them engaged in terrorist actions; others, the “politicos,” developed false propaganda or disinformation campaigns, or focused on lobbying the US administration; and many of them simply carried out their counterrevolutionary combat from the comfort of the domino tables in Little Havana in Miami.

The MRR headed by Manuel Artime was one of the terrorist groups, which from February 1963 — with CIA funding and US government approval — began to train a commando force in Nicaragua aimed at harassing Cuba’s maritime trade. They also had a trained military force that, at the right moment, could be used to implement a coup against the Cuban government.

Another organization to benefit from the “fairy godmother” administration was the Revolutionary Junta in Exile (JURE), headed by

the traitor Manuel Ray Rivero,<sup>2</sup> a former cabinet minister in the revolutionary government who enjoyed the sympathy of US presidential advisors. At the time of the Bay of Pigs invasion the CIA sidelined him on account of his political conflicts with other exile leaders, but later he was deemed appropriate to lead a new “political front” unconnected to the pro-Batista groups. The administration’s analysts probably thought that he might represent a political alternative to Fidel Castro, or at least a bargaining chip.

The Insurreccional Movement for the Recovery of the Revolution (MIRR) was a splinter group from the MRR. Founded by a group of renegades from the revolutionary movement, it had emerged in the shadow of the New Orleans Mafia. Its leader was arch-terrorist Orlando Bosch Ávila, a deranged doctor who, years later [in 1976], gained notoriety for ordering the mid-air sabotage of a Cuban passenger plane with 73 people on board. In that year alone there were 11 bombings of factories and public buildings on the island. In 1978, an investigative US congressional committee defined the group in the following way:

The Committee could not understand how the MIRR was capable of funding its costly operations; moreover, Bosch did not specify any source. Bosch told the Committee that his association with Frank Sturgis concerned the organization of 11 aerial attacks on Cuba... The funds were initially supplied to the MIRR by Paulino Sierra Martínez, a Cuban exile located in Chicago, through collecting money from the interests of “organized gambling”...

The Revolutionary Student Directorate (DRE), formed in Havana in 1960 as an offshoot of the Catholic secular movement that took the side of

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2. Manuel Ray Rivero: an active member of the resistance against the Batista dictatorship and minister of Public Works in the first revolutionary government cabinet. Later, he distanced himself from the revolution and founded the counterrevolutionary group Revolutionary Movement of the People (MRP) at the end of 1959. He was subsequently expelled from the MRP on account of his social-democratic ideas, and in 1963 he founded the Revolutionary Junta in Exile (JURE), which established firm links with the Kennedy administration.

reaction and capital from the early days of the revolutionary triumph, moved in another direction. From the beginning it was manipulated by CIA officer David Phillips, who utilized its leader Manuel Salvat Roque as a link with underground cells. Like the other groups, it was caught up in the revolutionary tide and its leaders had no alternative other than to emigrate to the lair of their patrons. From there, they took two forms of action: organizing terrorist attacks against Cuba from armored vessels, and conducting political propaganda against the revolution in Latin America.

Another group arose from the union of Alpha 66 and the Second National Front of the Escambray, the first commanded by Antonio Veciana Blanch, a veteran CIA agent, and the second by Eloy Gutiérrez Menoyo, a former commander of the Cuban Rebel Army. Its specialty would be terrorism, and from a camp in the Dominican Republic they planned incursions into eastern Cuba.

The project consisted of attacking the island from its flanks at a particular moment in order to initiate a war of attrition, or if the conditions arose, to lead the US troops in a direct invasion. Its operational bases were located in the New Orleans-Dallas corridor. From the outset, Veciana was an active agent and terrorist, responsible for a whole series of assassination attempts on the Cuban president and another operation to assassinate Ernesto Che Guevara.

Another active group was the United National Liberation Front (FULN), commanded by Aureliano Sánchez, a veteran politician from prerevolutionary Cuba who was an ally of Felipe Vidal Santiago,<sup>3</sup> a former Batista officer who had organized various civil-social bodies in exile, such as the Chamber of Commerce, the United Workers Front, the Association of Women, and the Student Front, with the aim of bringing together exiles by any means possible. According to his statements to

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3. Felipe Vidal Santiago: ex-naval officer from the Fulgencio Batista dictatorship who sought asylum in the United States a few months after the revolutionary triumph. Detained in Cuba years later as a CIA agent, he gave significant information.

the Cuban authorities, Vidal was acting under orders from a CIA officer, William Bishop. The FULN's political life was ephemeral, but in early 1963 it led a campaign charging President Kennedy with betraying the Cuban cause. Vidal confessed that in November 1963 Bishop received a significant sum of money from multimillionaire Howard Hughes in Dallas as a contribution to the exile cause, on the condition that they combined counterrevolutionary efforts to eliminate the "White House rose," an allusion to President Kennedy.

The Commandos L, founded by Antonio Cuesta Valle,<sup>4</sup> were an offshoot of Alpha 66, the result of conflicts over the division of CIA remittances. They were terrorists run by the capo of the local New Orleans Mafia, who combined trade in contraband with attacks on many coastal targets in Cuba, until Cuesta was captured in the course of one such mission in 1966.

The Mambi Commandos faction, headed by Manuel Villafañá, former chief of the Assault Brigade 2506 air force based in New Orleans, and the Cuban Liberation Movement, captained by Rolando Masferrer, were among the CIA's "star" groups in its new strategy of autonomous operations. The former replaced the dismantled special missions groups and the latter was responsible for internal order within the Cuban exile community, with orders to prevent dissident factions arising.

However, there were many other counterrevolutionary groups, all wanting to take a piece of the pie offered by the empire in return for sowing warfare and sorrow in the land of their ancestors.

The CRC headed by José Miró Cardona was dissolved in April 1963 after sharp disagreements with the US administration over the anti-Cuba political project. The Junta of the Cuban Government in Exile (JGCE) now appeared on the scene, headed by Carlos Prío and the gangster Paulino Sierra, who claimed to represent the interests of former casino owners in Havana. In 1978, investigators from the US House Select

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4. Antonio Cuesta Valle: terrorist and leader of the Commandos L. A member of the Junta of the Cuban Government in Exile (JGCE) and a veteran CIA agent.



Committee discovered JGCE trips to Nicaragua in 1963 for meetings with Manuel Artime and the dictator Luis Somoza, visits to the training camps in the Dominican Republic, meetings with Bosch and Salvat in New Orleans, the acquisition of large consignments of weapons and war equipment, meetings with Mafia capos — quite an active “social life,” as their report confirmed:

The group was spending money on arms and equipment for late summer 1963. Rich Lauchli, a known arms dealer, was in contact with Sierra in August. Sierra asked Steve Wilson, a soldier of fortune and associate of Gerry Hemming, to send weapons to Miami. The FBI received information that Sierra, accompanied by José Cardoso, had been buying arms in Detroit to the value of \$6,000 to \$7,000. Sierra was also involved in discussions with various groups to aid an operation against Cuba. Those contacted and willing to act together were: Aldo Vera Serafin from the MAPA group, Eloy Gutiérrez and Antonio Veciana from Alpha 66, Santiago Álvarez and Antonio Cuesta from the Commandos L, and Eduardo Mir Ruiz and Orlando Bosch from the MIRR.

Information from the same source affirmed that in November 1963, the US secret service was aware that Homero Echevarría, a representative of Sierra in Chicago, was purchasing arms and military supplies to initiate a second invasion of Cuba.

## War is Unleashed

The month of January 1963 began with a top-secret meeting between Attorney General Robert Kennedy, who was now in charge of the anti-Cuba operation, and exile CIA agents Manuel Artime and Enrique Ruiz Williams, two leaders of the Assault Brigade 2506 who had returned from Cuba after serving 12 months in prison, having been released in exchange for baby food. The discussion covered many things. Kennedy was interested to know the details of the recent failures of the subversive war. After a long discussion and a sumptuous lunch, over coffee the attorney general explained to the Cubans the administration's new strategy for overthrowing the Cuban government. The idea was relatively simple, or at least their role was. The plan was to form two new military contingents for multiple purposes ranging from maritime terrorism to preparing a vanguard for a US invasion of the island. One of the military camps would be supported by the Nicaraguan dictator Luis Somoza, and the other in the Dominican Republic would be backed by Joaquín Balaguer, the new president and heir to the dictator Rafael Leónidas Trujillo.

Both projects were to be developed as autonomous operations and supervised by CIA officers Howard Hunt and James McCord — future Watergate “plumbers” — with an initial budget of \$250,000 each, plus weapons and military supplies to be donated by the US military enclave in Panama.

Some weeks later, Robert Kennedy met with another prominent Cuban exile leader, Manuel Ray, whose social-democratic style organ-

ization (JURE) would present Latin America with an alternative post-revolutionary government in Cuba.

The SGA within the NSC responsible for the anti-Cuba operation was replaced by another committee, also headed by Robert Kennedy, who assigned the new project's tasks among each department as he saw fit. Thus, the Department of Trade was engaged in a project called Global Detectives, to hunt down anyone in any part of the world who dared defy the trade ban on Cuba. The US Information Agency (USIA) was given responsibility for a vicious campaign to ensure the island's political isolation, and the Pentagon organized contingency plans in case its participation was required. From January to March, a series of maneuvers known as Springhard 63 were initiated in the western Caribbean, near Puerto Rico, involving 4,000 men, 110 warships, and more than 100 fighter planes.

A survey of events that made news in that period clearly demonstrates what the preparations were. On January 8, the day before a meeting of the OAS, Secretary of State Adlai Stevenson announced that the United States could invoke the Rio de Janeiro Treaty to achieve action against Cuba. The following month, President Kennedy met with Central American leaders; the central item on the agenda was a discussion of "the solution to the Cuban case." Also in February, José Miró Cardona, president of the CRC, explained in a press conference that the Defense Department had decided to integrate veterans of the Assault Brigade 2506 into the central nucleus of the Latin American army it was building, adding that 3,000 Cubans recently recruited by the US Army were part of that plan. Meanwhile, a House select committee initiated an investigation into "communist subversion" in the continent. The month concluded with a meeting of the chiefs of staff of the armed forces convened to study actions to be taken in the event of an "uprising in Cuba."

Using the Mambi Commandos, the CIA initiated a series of infiltrations into Cuba with two defined aims: to supply its internal agents with military equipment, and to sabotage the country's energy system. Various important covert operations were underway, one of which,

AM/TRUNK, was later described by Miami CIA chief Ted Shackley as an attempt to recruit Cuban military officers to promote a coup d'état.

José Ricardo Rabel Núñez, a former Rebel Army captain and the project's principal agent, who was captured some years later by Cuban state security, testified:

From January 1, 1963, I was given a monthly wage by the CIA and supplied with a document called "Project for the rescue of the revolution betrayed," which consisted of creating a new group among former Rebel Army officers, who would establish a radio station. The second phase of the plan was to recruit individuals to infiltrate the island to recruit selected soldiers, and the final phase consisted of pressing for a change in the government's political strategy and, if that did not work, to organize an armed uprising...

Another operation was codenamed AM/LASH. This involved the assassination of Fidel Castro and the creation of a fifth column in support of forces led by Artime and Ruiz, who, under the direction of the CIA, were to land in Cuba and overthrow the government.

In the midst of all this, and emboldened by their chiefs in "the North," the domestic counterrevolutionaries embarked on a series of actions. On January 9, a group of bandits<sup>1</sup> attacked Los Dolores farm in the municipal terminal of San Antonio de los Baños in Havana province, killing a child and wounding a peasant named Agapito González. Meanwhile, in the central-eastern region of the country, another group murdered the family of Oliverio Morín Valdivia, on account of his political affiliations.

In August, as part of this covert action program, Cuban exile Rafael Martínez informed the press from Guatemala City that the Mambi Commandos had destroyed oil tanks containing 8,000 gallons of fuel in a surprise attack on Port Casilda in Las Villas province, and a few

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1. The Cuban rural population called those who took up arms against the revolution "bandits."

days later that they had also destroyed installations in Port Santa Lucía in Pinar del Río province.

The actions taken against Cuba in these months are described in various declassified US documents, which note that between June and September of 1963 President Kennedy approved more than 20 acts of sabotage against the island by US personnel. During that period, taking advantage of the relations established between US lawyer James Donovan<sup>2</sup> and Fidel Castro, there was an attempt to assassinate the Cuban leader by presenting him with the gift — supposedly from the attorney — of a diving suit impregnated with toxic substances.

One of the CIA's clear priorities was the elimination of the Cuban leader. Plans to achieve this included placing an explosive device activated by remote control inside a seashell left in a fishing area frequented by Fidel, and another plot to poison the prime minister during one of his visits to the Havana Hilton (now the Havana Libre). Other schemes involved a former gangster handled by the CIA eliminating Fidel during an event in Revolution Plaza, and the bombing of Fidel's home on the outskirts of Havana by Mike McLaney, a former casino operator, with planes based in New Orleans.

In 1963 alone, a total of 18 conspiracies to assassinate the Cuban leader were organized or encouraged by the CIA.

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2. James Donovan was a lawyer for the US government who negotiated the release of the mercenaries captured by Cuban forces at the Bay of Pigs.

## The Twin Track

The so-called Missile Crisis of October 1962 was without a doubt a moment for President Kennedy and his collaborators to reflect on the dangers that this confrontation might signify. The danger of extermination of humanity by nuclear weapons, where neither of the two sides could win, was doubtless the principal lesson to be learned. The famous “nuclear parity” was not achieved through the number of warheads each side possessed, but by the simple fact that just one missile could be fired, as Robert McNamara, secretary of defense at the time, acknowledged some years later.

It was probably this consideration, linked to the tacit commitment not to militarily attack Cuba, which led the president and his advisors to review the strategy against the Cuban revolution. Moreover, other vital issues were occupying the US rulers.

Kennedy’s “New Frontier” program was not accepted by important political and economic sectors, primarily in the south of the United States. The plans for racial integration, education aid, and medical care for the elderly were constantly questioned. The bureaucrats, mafiosi, and big business representatives had become the president’s implacable enemies, insofar as his government program affected their interests. Even the Catholics, headed by Cardinal Francis Spellman, a personal friend of Richard Nixon and the ultra-reactionary spiritual leader of the church, criticized him for refusing to appoint an ambassador to the Vatican and for discounting the idea of a “holy war” against the Soviet Union.

In 1963, while white unemployment continued rising, that of the African American population dropped from 11 to 10.9 percent. In the nation's universities and preparatory schools, 270,000 African Americans were studying, which was totally unacceptable to southern conservatives. On June 10, after Kennedy made a keynote speech on civil rights, racial conflicts broke out in various states. Panic spread throughout the South.

Between 1961 and 1963, Congress had passed the administration's initiative of a package of seven anti-crime bills, the most important criminal legislation passed since 1954. During the first six months of 1961, 171 mafiosi elements were handed down prison sentences, compared to just four in 1960. Many illegal gambling organizations were closed down. Just one of them, in Detroit, had recorded an annual income of more than \$20 million. In October, Attorney General Robert Kennedy persuaded mafioso Joe Valacchi to testify on the activities of the Cosa Nostra group, and the nation as a whole became aware for the first time of that organization's criminal activities.

In April 1962, Kennedy stated at a press conference:

For the American people, as for me, it is difficult to accept a situation in which a tiny group of steel industry leaders, whose desire for profits and personal power exceed their sense of responsibility, can demonstrate such total scorn for the interests of 805 million Americans.

The Pentagon was not only the most important purchaser of weapons but also the largest consortium in the world. In 1960 its assets stood at \$60 billion, and it owned 32 million acres of land in the United States and more than two million acres abroad, where its bases were located. The conflicts between the military and the president reached such an extreme that General Edwin Walker declared: "We must bring down the traitors and, if that is not possible, organize armed resistance to destroy the usurpers' designs and contribute to the return of a constitutional government." The *New York Times* reported that the Pentagon was having problems with the uniformed right. A large number of middle-

and higher-grade officers were indoctrinating their men and the civilian population in the vicinity of their bases with theories similar to those of the John Birch Society.

On March 30, 1963, it was decided to close down 52 military installations in the United States and a further 21 bases located in other countries. As if that was not enough, an agreement on the banning of nuclear tests was signed with the Soviet Union in the middle of that year.

The “flexible response” military theory, designed to deal with the national liberation wars shaking many Third World countries, was perceived by that sector of the army and the large arms dealers as a sign of weakness. The conflict in Vietnam was intensified by the active participation of the United States, prompting a cautious attitude on the part of the president, who refused to listen to the military chiefs’ advice to increase US support, already standing at 20,000 troops.

On the other hand, the policy on Latin America — Kennedy’s Alliance for Progress — while not offering a solution to the continent’s acute social and economic problems, was being questioned by the large transnationals. What was this about agrarian reform? — handing over land to campesinos was something communists did.

In brief, the country was shaken, and many of its institutions resisted the changes proposed by President Kennedy’s advisors on the basis that the United States should adjust its policies to the challenges of the final decades of the century in order to bolster US power, a power debilitated by the ultraconservative concepts of the Cold War. The paradox was that the nation calling itself the champion of democracy and equality did not allow African Americans to study at university, left senior citizens without medical insurance, and had ambassadors in Latin America and other Third World countries supporting dictatorships and coups d’état. These were the likely origins of the conflict between Kennedy and his domestic detractors, who failed to understand or did not want to understand the administration’s new strategies.

Cuba was an important issue on the US political agenda, as it had been from the beginning. The famous doctrine of National Security



always regarded the island as a domestic matter, as Cuba supposedly constituted the US border. Kennedy probably grasped — on the basis of past experience — that a military confrontation would not solve the “Cuba question,” and neither would a campaign of generalized subversion. Both strategies had failed and were the direct cause of the Missile Crisis; thus it was necessary to design a new policy, a policy that, while maintaining the objective of destroying the revolution, would take a different route, by removing the hold of the CIA and other agencies over Cuba policy and ensuring that it was directed by the president himself. This was the objective that was initiated in early 1963.

It was not a matter of making peace with the Cuban regime, as certain people have claimed, but of finding a way in the medium term to facilitate the undermining of the revolution from within. This gave rise to the “progressive corrosion” strategy, also known as “destruction from within,” where ideological, political, ethical, and moral values would be coupled with subversive ends within a new kind of war: psychological warfare. Pressures of all kinds would be increased, in combination with other subversive measures, including the economic and political blockade established the year before.

Various covert action programs received the green light from the administration. Robert Kennedy instructed the CIA to concentrate the ex-brigade members who had been imprisoned in Cuba in new camps in Central America and the Caribbean. The special missions groups were reorganized for sabotage operations deep within Cuba, and the basic objectives of the Cuban economy were selected as targets. In short, the strategy was to lay waste to the country, strangle its economy, isolate it politically, and discredit it so that eventually, when hunger and destruction reigned, the US administration could propose negotiations during which — it was assumed — Cuba would be forced to accept the conditions imposed on it.

A glance at the report by the US Senate Commission (often referred to as the Church Commission, after its chairperson, Senator Frank Church), which in 1975 investigated CIA attempts to assassinate Fidel Castro, clearly demonstrates this.

Operation Mongoose was dissolved immediately after the October Missile Crisis and a Cuba coordinating committee was set up within the State Department, with the participation of diverse agencies and the responsibility of fomenting clandestine action. The SGA was dissolved, and the NSC Standing Group headed by McGeorge Bundy resumed the task of reviewing and approving clandestine actions against Cuba. The NSC Standing Group, the successor to the Executive Committee, also included Robert Kennedy, John McCone, and Theodore Sorensen.

The administration theorists insisted that if they advanced in an intelligent direction and took advantage of the division that had arisen between the Soviet Union and Cuba as a result of the settlement of the October Missile Crisis, they could divide the Cuban revolutionary movement and exclude from government the old communists, those whom they assumed would respond to Moscow's conservative line. A second step consisted of escalating subversive warfare in order to strangle the country economically and destroy its energy potential.

In the spring of 1963, Bundy presented the NSC Standing Group with a memorandum entitled "A Sketch of the Cuban Alternatives," which analyzed various possible directions for US policy toward the island.

The memorandum indicated that the desire to continue attacking Cuba remained, but admitted that there were few practical measures that the United States could take to achieve the overthrow of Fidel Castro.

In the memorandum, dated April 21, 1963, Bundy identified three possible "new initiatives":

- (a) A decision to force a noncommunist solution in Cuba by all necessary means...
- (b) A decision to insist on major but limited ends...
- (c) The US could move in the direction of gradual development of some form of accommodation with Castro.

These alternatives were discussed in two meetings on April 23 and May 28. In the second, John McCone proposed a series of measures to increase economic difficulties in Cuba, complemented by sabotage,

in order to create a situation in which it would be possible to subvert military leaders to the point of acting to overthrow Castro. For his part, Robert McNamara stated that sabotage would not be decisive and suggested studying economic pressures that would upset Castro. Robert Kennedy affirmed that the United States had to do something against Castro, "even if we don't believe that our actions will overthrow him." Bundy summed up by saying that the task was one of deciding then and there what actions could be taken against Fidel Castro, while acknowledging that the practical measures to be taken would not result in his overthrow.

After that initial approval, specific intelligence and sabotage operations were submitted to the Standing Group for its subsequent approval. On October 3 the Standing Group agreed to nine operations in Cuba, several of which involved sabotage. On October 24, it approved a further 13, all of some magnitude, including the destruction of an electrical plant, an oil refinery, and a sugar mill.

Another Bundy memorandum, signed April 7, 1963, had reviewed seven aspects of the clandestine action program undertaken in the former period:

1. The collection of intelligence.
2. Clandestine propaganda to incite forms of active and passive resistance involving little risk.
3. Cooperation with other agencies in negating economic progress.
4. Identifying and establishing contacts with potential dissidents within Cuba.
5. Indirect economic sabotage.
6. Sabotage actions directed by the CIA.
7. Autonomous actions.

Nevertheless, in a subsequent meeting on June 3, the Standing Group agreed that it would be a "useful effort" to explore "various possibilities of establishing channels of communication with Castro." In the fall of that year, William Attwood, special advisor to the US delegation to the

United Nations with the rank of ambassador, initiated those contacts.

Attwood testified before the Church Commission that from September to November 1963 he had a series of talks with Cuba's UN ambassador to discuss initiating negotiations between Fidel Castro and the United States. Attwood stated that he initially informed Robert Kennedy of those talks, and that the latter told him that they were worth continuing. Attwood also stated that he had regularly kept the White House and Adlai Stevenson, his boss at the UN, up to date with developments. He affirmed that Bundy had told him that President Kennedy was in favor of moving toward a breakthrough with Cuba, pulling Castro out of the Soviet embrace, moving on from the Bay of Pigs, and restoring normal relations.

Attwood stated that the only people who knew of his contact with the Cubans were President Kennedy, Ambassador Averell Harriman, Ambassador Adlai Stevenson, Attorney General Robert Kennedy, McGeorge Bundy, Bundy's assistant, and the journalist Lisa Howard. He also testified that he had arranged for French journalist Jean Daniel to visit the White House prior to his planned journey to interview Fidel Castro.

On November 18, 1963, Attwood spoke by phone with a member of Fidel Castro's staff in Cuba. In line with White House instructions he informed him that the United States was in favor of preliminary talks at the UN headquarters rather than in Cuba, as the Cubans proposed, and that he wished to draw up an agenda for the talks. Attwood informed Bundy of these talks, and was told by him that when the Cuban agenda for the meeting arrived, President Kennedy wanted to talk to him (Attwood) to "decide what was to be said, if he should attend, and what should be done afterwards." Bundy informed Attwood that after a short trip to Dallas, the president wanted to see him to "discuss the next steps..."

## Conflicts between the Exiles and the Kennedy Administration

Relations between the US administration and the leadership of the Cuban exile movement during the first quarter of 1963 became antagonistic. The administration was demanding that the exiles fall into line with the new anti-Cuba strategy, and realizing this meant a significant loss of power, they violently resisted; the conflict did not take long to explode.

During those months, José Miró Cardona, the key leader of the CRC, stated on his return from a trip to Washington:

The policy of the US government has abruptly, violently, and unexpectedly changed in a dangerous way, just as it did on that sad occasion of the Bay of Pigs, without the slightest reasonable explanation... In the face of this situation, which has destroyed in one minute the patient labor of two years during which I have enjoyed the Council's confidence, I have no alternative but to step down...

His resignation was quickly accepted by the administration, as if they had expected it.

This was, in fact, the case. Earlier that year, various officials close to Kennedy had met with Manuel Ray, a defector from the revolutionary government and a self-styled social democrat. He was directed to reorganize the exile community and to that end created the JURE, which proposed a pseudo-revolutionary plan based on acknowledgment of the Cuban government's socioeconomic advances, but harshly critical

of socialism and the leadership of Fidel Castro.

Meanwhile, another exile and CIA agent, Felipe Vidal,<sup>1</sup> detonated a political bombshell in Miami by stating that he had uncovered supposed negotiations between the Kennedy brothers and the Cuban government behind the exiles' backs. According to Vidal, when he was in Washington, he had learned through Marshall Diggs, an eminent attorney, that the State Department was preparing for a meeting in East Berlin with the Cuban leader Blas Roca, where the planned negotiations between the two governments were to be discussed.

This information, skillfully manipulated, was passed on to all sectors of the exile community, which rapidly concluded that the Kennedy administration had abandoned them for the third time.

In this atmosphere, notorious terrorist Orlando Bosch published a pamphlet in New Orleans titled "La tragedia de Cuba" (The Tragedy of Cuba), in which he directly charged Kennedy with having betrayed the exiles and with trying to make a pact with Fidel Castro. At the same time, an individual of Cuban origin, Paulino Sierra, dramatically appeared on the stage claiming to represent "powerful interests in the organized gambling syndicate" (former casino owners in Havana), who were prepared to fund the exiles for a new attack against Cuba. Appearing at Sierra's side were former Cuban president Carlos Prío and Felipe Rivero, another well-known terrorist.

The news borne by these new "heralds of freedom" came like a New Year's gift to the exile sector, and soon afterwards, the political front known as the JGCE emerged, with the aim of uniting the Cuban-American political spectrum. Manuel Artime's MRR and even Orlando Bosch's MIRR joined it. This organization represented the CIA's and the Mafia's answer to the Kennedy brothers' JURE.

The JGCE immediately got down to work and toured spokespeople around the United States, Central America, and the Caribbean in order to rally its troops. The Mafia had donated \$50 million in exchange for the promise to restore its casinos, and that money had to be divided

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1. Felipe Vidal Santiago was captured in 1964 trying to infiltrate Cuba.

among the different counterrevolutionary groups according to their confirmed strength.

According to the account of a CIA operative,<sup>2</sup> in May a light aircraft landed on the islet of Bimini, part of the Bahamas archipelago close to Florida. It was that agent's final trip to ferry various individuals there, including: Carlos Prío, leader of the recently created Junta; John Roselli, the Mafia capo; William Carr, aide to Colonel King, chief of the CIA's Western Hemisphere Division; and Robert Rogers, case officer. The meeting's objective was to discuss the Cuba question and the administration's new policy.

We also found information from an intelligence source reporting a meeting "very close to Nassau" involving Carlos Prío, the Mafia, and the CIA, in which it was decided to assassinate Fidel Castro, place maximum pressure on President Kennedy to abandon his new policy on Cuba, and to organize an incident (in other words, a provocation) between the governments of the United States and Cuba that would provide the former with a pretext to launch a military attack on the island.

During the months of May to September 1963, similar, but vague, reports were received from other intelligence sources located in the United States, alluding to other meetings with similar objectives. Participants included terrorist elements such as Frank Sturgis, Howard Hunt, Orlando Piedra, Antonio Cuesta, Eladio del Valle, Joaquín Sanjenís, Luis Posada Carriles, Manuel Artime, Orlando Bosch, Antonio Veciana, the Novo Sampol brothers, and others.

Nevertheless, despite efforts made by Cuban officers, nothing could be confirmed. It should be borne in mind that during that period the Cuban intelligence services were very weak, and acquired information principally through individuals, many of them residents in the United States, who out of a sense of solidarity advised us of these conspiracies being hatched against the youthful revolution.

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2. Robert Plumlee: described by William Turner and Warren Hinckle as an experienced CIA pilot.

Forty years later, one can deduce that during those months a conspiracy of international dimensions was probably being organized, based on three propositions: the assassination of Fidel Castro, a US invasion of Cuba, and the reversal by any means possible of the Kennedy administration's newly designed Cuba policy.

For the first time, the exile movement and the CIA-directed Mafia decided to act alone, independently of the administration, in pursuit of their own objectives.

Determined not to be betrayed or marginalized, a monster composed of exiled Cubans, US citizens, and elements of organized crime began to take shape. Taking on a life of its own, it developed its own policies and would change legislation, elect governors, or eliminate presidents, according to its interests. Today, this group is commonly referred to as the Miami Cuban mafia.

We do not know exactly when the assassination plot against Kennedy was initiated and how it was developed; possibly that information is in some CIA file somewhere. Perhaps it began as one of the many autonomous operations created in those days, but, according to what we know, one of the first steps was Lee Harvey Oswald's transfer to the city of New Orleans in April 1963, where he would assume his political facade as a "Castro sympathizer." Then came the aforementioned meeting in the Bahamas, where the assassination of Fidel Castro was agreed to, along with a provocation that would facilitate US involvement in a direct aggression against Cuba. The plan to eliminate Kennedy was probably added in the following months.

The Miami Cubans were not prepared, as has been demonstrated, to experience further humiliations, such as the Bay of Pigs defeat, the non-military outcome of the October Missile Crisis, and above all, the exchange of imprisoned members of the Assault Brigade 2506 for medicines and baby food.



## AM/LASH

The theater of operations was ready, according to the CIA and Mafia's "Cuban American Mechanism." Kennedy would have to renounce his Cuba policy with a view to his reelection or be swept away by the Republicans, headed by Richard Nixon, an old friend of the exiles. They knew of most of the anti-Cuba subversive operations underway, either because they were active participants or through contacts with those involved.

This was the case with Operation AM/LASH, probably the most advanced CIA conspiracy against the revolution to that time. Originally, the plan was to combine the assassination of Fidel Castro with an internal coup provoked by dissident elements within the Rebel Army and the revolutionary ranks. Later, with the support of the Mafia in Miami, the plot evolved into a series of plots to assassinate Cuban leaders, combined with a planned invasion of exiles in an attempt to seize part of Cuban territory, with the objective of installing a "provisional government" that would then solicit US aid to "pacify" the island.

In 1975, the Senate Commission chaired by Senator Frank Church, investigating CIA plans for the elimination of political leaders hostile to US policies, revealed for the first time — albeit in a highly limited form — those plots to assassinate the Cuban president. It was precisely during those commission hearings that the AM/LASH case was mentioned, without revealing the identity of the key agent and without making

public in its entirety the report that the CIA inspector general had prepared in 1967 on those homicidal plots.<sup>1</sup>

In its conclusions, the Senate Commission, also known as the Church Commission, noted:

In 1967, the Central Intelligence Agency had made an internal study of the Castro, Trujillo, and Diem assassination allegations.<sup>2</sup> That study was quite useful, particularly in suggesting leads for uncovering the story of the actual assassination activity. Unfortunately, the working papers relating to that investigation were destroyed upon the completion of the Report, pursuant to instructions from CIA Director Richard Helms.

These notes were destroyed because of their sensitivity and because, it was argued, the information they contained had already been incorporated into the Report.

The commission report continued:

Some ambiguities in the evidence arise from the practice of concealing CIA covert operations from the world and performing them in such a way that, if discovered, the role of the United States could be plausibly denied. An extension of the doctrine of "plausible deniability" had the result that communications between the Agency and high Administration officials were often convoluted and imprecise.

The Church Commission described Operation AM/LASH as "genuinely distinct" from the joint conspiracies of the CIA and the underworld, saying it "was very much alive at the time of the assassination (of Kennedy) and the CIA could have easily followed up on it with the idea that Castro's death was a consequence." However, the commission

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1. Published with an introduction by Fabián Escalante as *CIA Targets Fidel*, (Melbourne & New York: Ocean Press, 1996).
  2. Rafael Leónidas Trujillo, then dictator of the Dominican Republic, and Ngo Dinh Diem, puppet president of South Vietnam.

found that there was no evidence that Fidel Castro or other leaders of the Cuban government had conspired in the assassination of President Kennedy in reprisal for US actions against Cuba.

A few years later, the House Select Committee report noted that the Church Commission had "left the door open by establishing that the investigation should continue in certain directions, and thus did not adopt any conclusion."

The Church Commission report was published on November 20, 1975. In response two years later, a special group within the CIA was assigned to investigate and evaluate the critical issues that had arisen, and in particular, to consider the thesis of revenge. The report by the CIA Task Force in 1977 specifically responded to the Church Commission in relation to Operation AM/LASH by affirming:

Whatever the relation was with [agent] AM/LASH after the death of the president, everything indicates that during Kennedy's lifetime, AM/LASH had no basis to believe that he could count on even minimal CIA support. Whether it was the case of an agent provocateur who informed Castro, or simply an oversight that permitted a leakage of what he knew, he had no objective basis on which to divulge information about any real CIA plan against Castro.

On September 17, 1976, a US House of Representatives Select Committee was assigned the task of considering the conspiracy controversy regarding the assassination of Kennedy and to investigate, among other matters, alleged Cuban complicity, an issue that still remained unresolved.

In their report, released in 1978, the committee reviewed the work of the Church Commission, noting:

The Commission acknowledged that the CIA review of 1967 could have been correct but the [CIA Task Force's] 1977 report was not supported by any evidence... For example, it failed to provide a detailed summary of the antecedents, the CIA case officers, the Cubans, and the Mafia personalities who were conspiring to assassinate Castro. At no point did the report deal with the activities of those conspiring against Castro during the second semester of 1963.

The House Select Committee concluded that the CIA Task Force's report in 1977 was merely an attempt to deflect the criticisms made by the Church Commission, and furthermore considered that Richard Helms's denial that Operation AM/LASH was an assassination conspiracy, like his other statements, were "irrelevancies that only served the interests of their authors."

In his statement to the House Select Committee, Joseph Langosch, counterintelligence chief of personnel of CIA special missions in 1963, said that it was highly possible that Cuban intelligence already knew of AM/LASH and his association with the CIA in 1962. The committee concluded, however, that it was unable to determine if that possibility was a reality.

The Cuban government informed the House Select Committee at the time that, on the basis of the Church Commission's information, it had come to the conclusion that agent AM/LASH was in fact Rolando Cubela. The committee did not corroborate this, and moreover stated that it was unaware of Cubela's activities until April 1965, but concluded it "was unable to confidently accept or reject" the Cuban government's assertion:

If the Cuban government had stated that it was aware of those plans, it would have contributed to the credibility of [the Church Commission's] theories on Cuba's possible participation in the assassination as an act of vengeance.

The House Select Committee delegation that visited Cuba in 1978 interviewed Rolando Cubela while he was serving a prison sentence and confirmed the revolutionary government's statement that Cubela himself had not given the Cuban authorities any information that could have led them to believe that the CIA was involved in a conspiracy to assassinate Fidel Castro in 1963. Nevertheless, the committee delegates suspected Cubela's testimony may have been influenced by the fact of his imprisonment.

The committee finally concluded that the AM/LASH conspiracy should have been reported to the Warren Commission,<sup>3</sup> not only because of “the possibility that such a conspiracy might have given Castro a stronger motive to retaliate against President Kennedy (assuming that, in fact, he was aware of this conspiracy prior to November 22, 1963), but also due to the fact that knowledge of the existence of the AM/LASH conspiracy could have spurred the CIA, the FBI, and the Warren Commission into undertaking a more profound investigation of the Cuban conspiracy.

The House Select Committee concluded it was “unable to present any evidence that President Kennedy was assassinated as the result of revenge for US activities against Castro... On the basis of the evidence available to it, the committee determined that the Cuban government was not involved in the assassination of President Kennedy.”

It is obvious that the conclusions of the House Select Committee, the last official US effort to clarify the assassination, did not definitively exonerate the Cuban government of any conspiracy, given that the committee did not accept the argument that Cuba was unaware of Rolando Cubela’s conspiratorial activities prior to 1965, nor the statement made by the prisoner himself in corroboration of that fact.

Thus, the committee never clarified the mysterious connection between the Kennedy assassination and the conspiracy against Fidel Castro. Although the “vengeance” theory was considered, its causes were not explained, and neither were the real motives of the CIA or the fact that the CIA held Cubela in Paris until November 22, when he was given a special device (a poison needle) with which to assassinate Fidel Castro.

That is why we Cubans decided to investigate this episode, with the aim of providing evidence for Cuba’s claims to the House Select

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3. Warren Commission: chaired by Chief Justice Earl Warren, appointed by President Lyndon B. Johnson to investigate the Kennedy assassination. This commission’s report was completed in September 1964.

Committee in 1978, which the committee abstained from endorsing one way or the other. Moreover, I shall try to answer a series of questions arising from the CIA handling of the AM/LASH case, which tend to indicate that this could have been part of the plan to incriminate Cuba in the Dallas assassination.

Some of the questions that we posed are as follows:

- Why was there a misrepresentation of Cuban President Fidel Castro's comments in a casual conversation with the Associated Press (AP) correspondent Daniel Harker in the fall of 1963?
- Why did a local New Orleans newspaper pick up on Harker's report, precisely in a city that was to be linked with Kennedy's alleged assassin?
- Why did other press dispatches appear with dubious information implicating Cuba in the crime?
- How and why was there another press campaign in 1967 suggesting Cuba's involvement in the assassination, motivated out of revenge?
- Why did CIA director Richard Helms justify his report on the basis of what was published by the press in 1967, and why did he order the destruction of all the documents used in drafting it, including documents from the AM/LASH case?
- Why did the CIA ask agent AM/LASH [Cubela] to remain in Paris up until the assassination of President Kennedy and even afterwards?
- Why did the CIA offer AM/LASH a complex device to kill the Cuban president, without Cubela having asked for it?
- Why did Rolando Cubela's name appear on a list supplied by the CIA station in Mexico of persons in contact with intelligence officers at the Soviet Embassy in that city, if this was totally false?

- What was the connection between the assassination of Kennedy and that of Fidel Castro, the latter necessarily having to occur after the execution of the first? Were there other plans?

To find the answers to those questions we consulted all the documentation and sources covering the period 1959–63 to which we had access. We then compared the resulting information with the CIA inspector general's report [of 1967], which allowed us to corroborate the main points and expose flaws and intentional disinformation in that report.

Rolando Cubela was tried and convicted in Case No. 108 of 1966 for the crime of threatening state power. Tried along with Cubela were his closest accomplices: Ramón Guín Díaz, ex-commander of the Rebel Army; José Luis González Gallarreta; Alberto Blanco Romariz; Juan Hilario Alsina Navarro; Guillermo Cunill Álvarez; and Ángel Herrero Véliz. The sentences were handed down on March 11, 1966. Cubela and Guín received 25-year terms, Gallarreta and Blanco 20 years, and Alsina 10 years. Cunill and Herrero were acquitted.

Two days before the sentences were handed down, Fidel Castro, prime minister of the revolutionary government, sent a letter to the court, proposing that the death sentence should not be demanded for any of the accused. The court's conclusions took his recommendation into account.

## Who was Rolando Cubela?

Rolando Cubela Secades was born in the city of Placetas in 1932, from where he moved to Cárdenas, Matanzas province, where he completed his secondary education. He subsequently entered the University of Havana, where he played an active part in the struggle against the Batista dictatorship. He became military chief of the DRE and was arrested on various occasions in connection with his activities in that position.

At the end of 1956, after taking part in the execution of Colonel Antonio Blanco Rico, chief of the dictatorship's Military Intelligence Service (SIM), he emigrated to Miami.

In early 1958, he returned to Cuba as a member of a DRE revolutionary expedition and was involved in an armed uprising in the mountainous region of the Escambray, in the province of Las Villas. There he was part of a guerrilla force combating the Batista regime until the revolutionary triumph of January 1959. He was elevated to the rank of commander of the Rebel Army on account of his actions and merit.

In 1959 he occupied the positions of deputy secretary of government, and deputy general secretary of the DRE. In September 1959, Cubela resigned from his governmental post, and, at the end of the following month, was elected president of the Federation of University Students (FEU) of Cuba.

From the early months of 1959 Cubela began to live a licentious existence, devoting his time to a group of select friends, many of whom he knew prior to January 1959. He drank too much and regularly



frequented nightclubs and cabarets, places in which he was involved in various public disturbances. This conduct was not only manifested in Cuba but also during his frequent trips abroad, taken in relation to his government posts.

Cubela was a voluble, unstable, and ambitious person, with a misguided view of friendship that blinded him to the defects of those around him and influenced his ideas, particularly in relation to some of his old Authentic Party<sup>1</sup> friends, who opposed the revolution virtually from the start. He was also unstable in his political thinking, which was contradictory and dependent on his state of mind at the time.

The incipient Cuban state security agencies were aware of Cubela's conduct and personality at that time, but taking into account his revolutionary credentials, they did not evaluate him as a threat to the stability of the country, and therefore he could have acted with relative impunity for a number of years. When he was charged and tried in 1966, it was in relation to evidence obtained from an investigation that commenced in April 1965. There was no solid evidence at that time dating his conspiratorial activities back any earlier. Cubela and his associates knew this and only acknowledged activities after 1964.

The extent of his activities in the period 1959–63 only became apparent when the 1975 Church Commission began investigating the activities of US intelligence agencies and revealed evidence of a series of plans to assassinate foreign leaders. The AM/LASH plot was first mentioned as one of many attempts on the life of the Cuban leader, Fidel Castro.

Certain evidence at that time pointed to the fact that the codename AM/LASH referred to an operation organized around Rolando Cubela. When this was confirmed, it was then possible for us to initiate a fuller investigation, involving a series of voluntary interviews with Cubela and a compilation of all the fragmented information available from

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1. The Cuban Revolutionary Party (*Autenticos*), headed by ex-presidents Ramón Grau and Carlos Prío.

diverse sources directly or indirectly linked to the other prisoners. Thus we were able to corroborate the extent of his activities in that period and obtain a large body of evidence to complete the true case history.

An analysis we undertook on July 16, 1976, identified certain coincidences between the material on AM/LASH made public by the Church Commission and the case of Rolando Cubela:

1. Both cases concerned a high-ranking official who, in 1961, enjoyed access to and the confidence of Fidel Castro.
2. Similarly, both indicated the subject's wish to remain living abroad.
3. In both cases there was a coincidence in the dates of the subject's absences abroad, particularly his location in France at the end of 1963.
4. There was no contact between the CIA and AM/LASH in the period late 1963 to early 1964, coinciding with a period when Cubela was in Cuba.
5. In both cases, contact with the CIA was renewed at the end of 1964.
6. In both cases the CIA put him in contact with a third party in order to conceal US participation in the operation.
7. Agent AM/LASH and Rolando Cubela both appeared to have unstable characters or temperaments, with constant changes in their decisions.

We also reviewed the first official statement Rolando Cubela made to the Cuban authorities in March 1966, when he stated that his initial link with the CIA was in 1964, and others that affirmed this.

On reviewing the legal documentation of the case against him, we found the original information that led to his investigation by the Cuban authorities:

On April 9, 1965, Cuban intelligence officer "Benito"<sup>2</sup> filed a report in which he stated that one of his sources living in Paris had told him that Rolando Cubela was working against Cuba... and that the source had not reported on the matter before as he lacked the necessary evidence, but had suspected Cubela for some time... The source stated that Cubela had not confided in him, but that he had a lot of evidence. He reported that while Cubela was staying in France, he made out to everyone that he did not have a cent, which seemed unlikely as he traveled continuously and spent a lot on partying and cabarets... drank a lot and when he did so, spoke out violently against Fidel... He traveled twice to Geneva, sometimes immediately after calls he received from one Jorge Robreño, a Cuban counterrevolutionary resident in Spain. The source reported that on various occasions Cubela had also called Carlos Tepedino, a CIA agent resident in the United States who had a jewelry business in New York, that Cubela had insinuated to him on various occasions that he was dealing with a lot of tension and that many of his friends were risking their lives, without telling him what it was about, and that moreover he was displaying a certain conduct that was being observed... The source also stated that US journalist Nancy Byrne was very close to Cubela and was linked to his suspicious activities, as well as another known subject resident in Miami, known as "Musculito."

Benito's assessment was that his source could have had various motives for now passing on those facts which, Benito judged, he was aware of before. Benito considered the possibility of personal motives, in addition to a desire to warn of a plot against Cuba. But that information, compared with others related to his unruly conduct and sporadic protests against the revolution, served as the basis to investigate Cubela.

That operation, which included diverse actions and work with agents in Cuba and abroad for nearly one year, finally led to the confirmation of the original information related to an assassination conspiracy and the conspirators' arrest and trial.

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2. Erasmo Terrero: former Cuban intelligence officer and known revolutionary journalist.

Everything that could be determined from this information was made public in the trial of those involved, covered by the Cuban and foreign press at the time. Years later, in 1976, after the revelations of the Church Commission identifying Cubela as agent AM/LASH, we set ourselves the task of reconstructing the true story, naturally including the information given us by Cubela, who was still serving his sentence and who would be released two years later.

The first element we established came from John Maples Spiritto, a North American CIA agent captured by the Cuban state security forces in 1961, who was also in prison. He stated that in 1958 the CIA involved him in a plot that included an armed uprising organized by a group of dissidents from the Batista dictatorship operating in the Escambray mountain range in the center of the island. He recalled that one of his assigned tasks was to study and report on various leaders of that group, known as the Second National Front of the Escambray, and Cubela's guerrilla group, which was also operating in the same territory.

We also discovered that in 1953 Cubela met Carlos Tepedino, a prosperous Cuban businessman of Italian origin who was the owner of a New York jewelry store. At that time Tepedino was in contact with anti-Batista groups, who used his jewelry store to meet and plan their activities.

In 1956, after the execution of SIM chief Colonel Antonio Blanco Rico, Cubela went to live in Miami, staying at the Trade Winds Hotel, owned by José Alemán Gutiérrez,<sup>3</sup> whom he had known for some time.

Cubela made contact with other long-time Cuban friends at the Trade Winds, including Eugenio Martínez (alias Musculito), Víctor Espinosa, and Alberto Blanco Romariz, all subsequently recruited by the CIA.

On his return to Havana in 1959 after the guerrilla stage of the struggle, Cubela once again linked up with Tepedino. By then, the latter had a jewelry store located in the Havana Hilton and was a friend of

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3. José Braulio Alemán Gutiérrez: alias Neneito, son of the former Cuban education minister of the same name, famous for having stolen \$20 million from the so-called pupils' breakfast budget.

Santos Trafficante, Jr., who had an office facing his business in the same hotel. There Cubela met Abelardo Martínez, a lawyer and fencing enthusiast who regularly used the sauna baths in that hotel.

In that same year, Cubela met up again with José Alemán in Havana, before the latter left for the United States. As Cubela recalled years later, it was a difficult year for him, because he felt passed over by not being given the important government position he believed he merited. In that period, he had already expressed to various friends his displeasure with the revolution and the measures being adopted.

In the first half of 1959 Cubela was appointed deputy secretary of the Ministry of Government, after declining a possible post as military attaché in a Western European country.

On June 9, 1959, Santos Trafficante was detained in a revolutionary anti-vice campaign. According to certain sources, various friends of his (including Cubela) interceded with the immigration authorities on his behalf to obtain a special permit so that the crime boss could attend the wedding of one of his daughters. Two months later, on August 18, Trafficante was released on bail pending his expulsion from the country at the beginning of 1960.

In August 1960, during a tour as the head of the student organization FEU, Cubela met with Carlos Tepedino in Switzerland and Italy. The appointments had been agreed upon in Cuba. In Rome, Tepedino organized a surprise lunch with Abelardo Martínez, an old friend of them both who was already operating as a CIA agent. According to Cubela, Martínez tried to influence him against the revolution during a "friendly political conversation," without them reaching any agreement. In early 1961, representing the Cuban student movement at a congress in Mexico, Cubela again met up with Carlos Tepedino. Cubela had called Tepedino in New York to announce his arrival in the Mexican capital. The Italian immediately traveled there to meet him and told him about a person who would like to talk to him "about a series of things happening in Cuba."

The meeting took place in a restaurant in Mexico City; the individual was introduced to Cubela by Tepedino as a member of a "regional

institution responsible for analyzing the communist influence in the area." That person was described by Cubela as a tall, Anglo-Saxon man, aged 40-plus, slim, slightly balding, with large teeth, bags under his eyes, good manners, well dressed, highly sociable, and who spoke perfect Spanish.

The conversation over lunch focused on the communist infiltration in Cuba and Cubela was aware that they were trying to recruit him but — according to his statement — this was not openly proposed and it did not materialize. In his 1976 testimony, Cubela said that although this individual was not introduced to him as a CIA agent, given the way he had spoken to him it was highly likely that he was.

The 1967 report by the CIA inspector general relates that an unidentified individual had offered his services to the FBI to collaborate in Cubela's defection. That same individual informed the Bureau of Cubela's March 1961 meeting with another unidentified person in Mexico City. The FBI informed the individual who had offered his collaboration in Cubela's defection that his request would be passed on to the CIA and informed its representative in Paris. Another memo disclosed in the CIA inspector general's report states:

[Censored], an officer then assigned to the Mexico City Station, met in Mexico City with Rolando Cubela to sound out Cubela on his views on the Cuban situation. Cubela had been attending the leftist-sponsored Latin America Conference on National Sovereignty, Emancipation, and Peace held in Mexico City from 5 to 8 March. Cubela was noncommittal. The meeting was arranged by [Censored] [AM/WHIP-1], a long-time friend of Cubela. Cubela knew [Censored] casually from Havana where [Censored] was once assigned and where a similar meeting had once been set up but had fallen through.

The person offering to collaborate to obtain Cubela's defection or recruitment by other means could possibly have been Tepedino, who had already been recruited by the CIA, and everything points to his codename being AM/WHIP. According to Cubela's account to the Cuban authorities in 1976, it was Tepedino who met him in Mexico and

who introduced him to the specialist in “communist” affairs, whom Cubela presumed was from the CIA.

Although Cubela’s statement and the information disclosed by the CIA coincide in noting that the March 1961 contact did not produce any concrete results, certain subsequent events cast doubt on this, given that evidence has come to light on his participation in a CIA-Mafia conspiracy to assassinate Fidel Castro just before the Bay of Pigs invasion.

A few days after his return from Mexico, Cubela stayed overnight in a boathouse in Casablanca, overlooking the Bay of Havana. This information was found among a cluster of other details related to a conspiracy of sailors who were in the navy during the years of the dictatorship. These included — during the days that Cubela was present — details of the repairing and starting up of a gasoline-powered vessel and the decanting of various weapons stashed there, as well as constant telephone calls to other provinces on the island.

Another fact was offered by Margarito Espinosa, a fugitive from revolutionary justice who, on March 28, 1961, told a source that Cubela was one of the individuals that the counterrevolution could count on to head its movement prior to the Bay of Pigs attack.

For its part, the CIA’s own 1967 report offered a motive that could explain Cubela’s preparations for a maritime exit from Cuba. The memo stated: “March 28, 1961. An asset from the Miami station reported that Rolando Cubela and Juan Orta wished to defect and needed help in escaping.” The memo continued:

Headquarters expressed interest in exfiltrating Orta and Cubela. The exfiltration attempt was called off as a result of a report stating that the Cuban police were aware of Cubela’s desire to defect and of his departure plans.

This information corroborates Cubela’s intention to defect but, at the same time, introduces a fresh element by linking him to Juan Orta, then secretary of the prime minister’s office, discovered years later to have been involved in a joint effort with Miami to poison the Cuban leader.

Referring to the March 28, 1961, memo, the CIA inspector general's report commented:

This is one of the three name-links we found in the AM/LASH file between Rolando Cubela and persons involved in the gambling syndicate episodes. The other two links are even more nebulous than this.

On September 8, 1961, Cubela traveled to Paris, where he stayed for one week. According to the CIA inspector general's report, a memo dated August 14 of that year noted that the Agency received the information that Cubela was planning to attend the central festival of the French National Student Union and that he had sent a message to a certain person in which he asked him to talk to the friend of an unnamed individual in Paris. The message was transmitted via an air stewardess and the CIA authorized an unnamed person to meet with Cubela, but, as the report states, it was not stated in the file whether the contact occurred.

It is probable that it was once again Tepedino whom the CIA authorized to meet with Cubela. We know nothing of what transpired there, although Cubela insisted in his 1976 statement that nothing was made concrete and the conversation was confined to a discussion of the "communist threat."

At the beginning of 1962, Cubela traveled with a group of 20 uniformed men to a mountainous region of the Escambray in the former province of Las Villas. He stayed in a campesino's house for two or three days and then returned to the capital, but without the men who had accompanied him, leaving them there. On various occasions groups of counterrevolutionary bandits had been caught committing all kinds of abuses and outrages against the campesino population. The outfit remained there for some 20 days, without incident. That was not the only time that Cubela went to that area, his old scene of operations when he was in the guerrilla movement, where he enjoyed the confidence and support of some campesinos.

Perhaps the objective of those trips was connected to preparations



for the armed uprising, as an alternative to the conspiracy being hatched to assassinate Fidel Castro.

A memo included in the CIA inspector general's report notes that by mid-June 1962, the Miami [CIA] JM/WAVE station was aware that Cubela had left Cuba for Helsinki to attend the World Festival of Youth and Students. The parents of an unidentified person, who had seen off Cubela in Havana on June 9, told another person that Cubela wanted to defect, and on his return to Cuba, would be traveling to Paris where he was hoping to meet an old friend.

Another memo dated June 27, 1962, states that the FBI passed on to the CIA a report on Cubela's contact with an FBI informer in Miami on June 11. The informer communicated the fact of Cubela's journey to Helsinki and his wish to defect. The Bureau gave the CIA a detailed memo, identifying its source as an old CIA contact who had offered his services to the FBI to collaborate in Cubela's defection. The FBI said that it had informed the source that his proposal would be passed on to the corresponding US agency.

Once again it is probable that the person Cubela wanted to contact in Paris was his friend Carlos Tepedino. That is confirmed by another memo of July 8, 1962, contained in the CIA inspector general's report, noting that AM/WHIP said that "he had approached the FBI in Miami because of dissatisfaction with the way the CIA had handled Cubela's 'planned defection' in Paris in August 1961." In another section, the report says that on July 13 and 14, 1962, a certain person from headquarters met with another in New York. The person from headquarters agreed to contact the other in Helsinki and travel to another location if it should be necessary to aid Cubela's defection attempt. The New York individual is defined as a successful Cuban exile who rejected an offer to pay for his total expenses, only accepting a refund of his flight and hotel costs.

Who, if not Tepedino, was a "successful businessman" at that time?

On July 30, the report continues, the CIA officer from headquarters and an unidentified individual – which we assume to be Tepedino – met in Helsinki and made the first contact with Cubela there on

August 1. The CIA officer decided to modify the defection plan by recruiting him then and there. According to the CIA officer's report to headquarters, Cubela was in favor of returning to Cuba and engaging in the struggle there:

He said he was not interested in risking his life for any small undertaking, but that if he could be given a really large part to play, he would use himself and several others in Cuba whom he could rely upon. He said he had plans to blow up an oil refinery... He also wanted to plan the execution of Carlos Rodríguez<sup>4</sup> and the Soviet ambassador, and also to eliminate Fidel, by execution if necessary. While we were making no commitments or plans, we pointed out that schemes like he envisioned certainly had their place...

The assertion in the report that this was the date of Cubela's recruitment does not seem likely, far less that his recruiter had not proposed any commitment or plans. Why then, did he discourage Cubela from defecting and returning to Cuba? They probably agreed on various actions then and there, but given the practice of "plausible denial," the CIA made Cubela responsible for the initiatives. Other information revealed in the CIA inspector general's report confirmed that commitments and plans were indeed made with the recruit.

On August 8 and 9 there were further contacts with Cubela in Stockholm and Copenhagen. Tepedino was probably present during the talks with Cubela related to the plot against Fidel Castro. The information on those encounters disclosed by the CIA inspector general mentions that "at one point the word 'assassinate' was used and they realized that Cubela objected to it and was visibly affected. He was not opposed to the act but to the choice of the word. He said that in discussing the matter 'eliminate' was acceptable to him."

Cubela was in Paris from August 14 to 23, 1962, where a Spanish-speaking CIA officer trained him in the use of secret writing via the

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4. Carlos Rafael Rodríguez: a veteran communist fighter and Cuban academic, who held various positions in the revolutionary government.

mail, giving him the means to establish communication.

The CIA inspector general's report contains a communication sent to CIA headquarters on August 17, 1962, which states that an unidentified officer noted: "Have no intention give Cubela physical elimination mission as requirement but recognize this something he could or might try to carry out on his own initiative."

Cubela stayed in Paris until August 29, 1962, when he returned to Havana. A few days before his return, on August 20, the CIA inspector general's report places him outside of the city on demolition exercises. It also notes that they wanted to give him a polygraph test but Cubela refused.

As can be noted, the messages between the unidentified CIA officer and his superiors reveal an anticipation of events in that the physical elimination of the Cuban president had been discussed, and moreover that they gave Cubela training in demolition work; in other words, the use of explosives, which could have been related to activities selected at that time to accompany the plot.

Back in Cuba, Cubela was in the Dos Arroyos area of the Escambray during September and October and later went to the town of Placetas, both in the central province of Las Villas. There he met up with the same campesinos that he had spent time with earlier that year, probably to follow up on his preparations.

The Missile Crisis took place that October, while Cubela was on a basic course for armed forces officers. At the end of it, he was offered the position of army information chief, but turned it down. Shortly afterwards, he was discharged from the armed forces.

In his statement to the Cuban authorities on that period, he stated: "I was beginning to feel unstable again and tried to seek refuge by traveling abroad, as I had done on previous occasions. But this time my intention was more definite as I was thinking of remaining in France."

In 1963 Cubela was working as a doctor in the Comandante Manuel Fajardo Hospital in Havana. He left for Brazil on August 27, 1963, invited to the Student Games in Porto Alegre. On his arrival — according to his own statement — he applied for a French visa and obtained the

money for his fare from a Venezuelan acquaintance, whom he promised to refund in Cuba. He added that from Brazil he called Luis Enrique Trasancos, a Cuban employee attached to our embassy in France, asking him to find him somewhere to stay, and also talked to Tepedino in New York, informing him of his intention to remain in France.

The CIA inspector general's report contains information dated September 5 to 8, 1963, to the effect that, in Brazil, Cubela met with two persons and a Spanish-speaking officer from headquarters, who subsequently acted as Cubela's case officer. The CIA inspector general states that in the meeting:

Cubela discussed a group of Cuban military officers known to him, and possible ways of approaching them. The problem was, he explained, that although many of them were anticommunist they were either loyal to Fidel or were so afraid of him that they were reluctant to discuss any conspiracies for fear they might be provocations. Cubela said that he thought highly of [Censored] [AM/TRUNK], who was hiding [Censored]. [Censored] had been sent to Cuba by the CIA to recruit [Censored] in place, and had done so. Cubela said that he planned to use [Censored] but was concerned about [Censored]'s "nervous condition" and the fact that he drank heavily. Cubela was told to assist [Censored] in [Censored] intelligence assignments, but not to help [Censored] leave Cuba — as Cubela proposed.

We concluded that AM/TRUNK was the intelligence operation aimed at recruiting Cuban officers and that Ramón Guín Díaz, one of its objectives, was hiding Manuel Díaz Isalgué, who had been sent to Cuba to recruit him and had succeeded. Cubela thought of utilizing Guín. His officer instructed him to help him in his intelligence tasks but not to help Isalgué to leave Cuba. Thus the jigsaw puzzle could be fitted together.

Cubela was also contacted by the CIA in September, but analyzing his statements to the Cuban authorities and material in the CIA inspector general's report, we found a crucial contradiction. Cubela affirmed that he only met with the CIA officers in Paris, while the CIA inspector

general's report states that the first meeting was in Brazil.

According to a reconstruction of Cubela's trips abroad, on September 13, 1963, he left Brazil for Paris. The CIA inspector general's report confirms his arrival in that city the following day and notes that "he was there ostensibly to attend the Alliance Française, but actually to take an extended vacation — of which he planned to inform Fidel after the fact."

Moreover, that report also reveals that on September 16 Cubela wrote to AM/WHIP in New York, saying "I don't intend to see (be interviewed by) your friend again," and asking that this be passed on to them "so they don't make the trip. I want to get away from politics completely..."

Of course, the information disclosed by the CIA inspector general censors the identity of the recipient of the letter, although we believe it had to be Tepedino.

Cubela's expressed desire not to meet up again with the CIA demonstrates that in Brazil he either refused to continue collaborating, or that the meeting never took place, which would mean that the contacts mentioned by the CIA inspector general do not correspond to real events and that the reference in the report had a specific purpose, probably to justify CIA counterintelligence concerns about Cubela being a double agent.

According to Cubela, when he arrived in Paris on September 14, 1963, he made contact with Tepedino and reaffirmed his idea of staying in France. Under directions from the CIA, Tepedino convinced him to talk with a "second Spanish-speaking CIA officer," because if he really wanted entry into the United States at a later stage, those people could help him. Cubela agreed and the interview took place in an apartment located in central Paris.

The Spanish-speaking officer who contacted him was identified as David Sánchez Morales via a photo that we acquired in totally coincidental circumstances. In 1978, during the World Festival of Youth and Students in Cuba, Cubela offered to give a public explanation of CIA activities against the revolution, and in that context, had access to a

tabloid that we had prepared that exposed the Agency's past activities and included photos of all the diplomat-spies operating in Havana in 1960, including Sánchez Morales, whom Cubela fully identified.

It was really very strange, as apparently Sánchez Morales had nothing to do with Cubela's case, and according to our information, was involved at that time in a conspiracy organized from Miami in conjunction with the capo John Roselli to assassinate Fidel Castro.

Sánchez Morales's connection with the AM/LASH case introduced a new element, suggesting the possibility he might have been manipulating it on the margins of the plan drawn up by headquarters. It is worth recalling here the existing differences between CIA counterintelligence and the SAS responsible for going ahead on the AM/LASH operation. If the CIA suspected that Cubela was a double agent, it is possible that other agents, such as Sánchez Morales, sidelined from it, attempted to utilize Cubela for their own projects.

In relation to the Paris interview, Cubela told the Cuban authorities that he insisted "the only way he could see of solving the Cuban problem was by eliminating Fidel, and that his elimination would cause divisions within the government and provoke the collapse of the regime." The officer (identified by Cubela as Sánchez Morales) told him that he was going to report this back to Washington. Meanwhile, he put Cubela in touch with another officer, whom the former described as a tall North American man, blond, who did not speak Spanish, and whom he did not take to due to the man's arrogance.

According to Cubela, at that time he met with "Bichi" Bernal,<sup>5</sup> with whom he had a conversation on his contacts with CIA officers. Cubela told him of his dislike of the officer who was currently attending him. Bernal then put him in contact with another CIA officer, an older man living with his family in an upper-class Paris district, to whom Cubela expressed his desire to talk to a responsible US government official. In that meeting he received a commitment to communicate and effect his wishes. Apparently, that officer was chief of the CIA station in Paris.

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5. "Bichi" Bernal was the Cuban military attaché in Japan who subsequently defected after being recruited by the CIA.

Bernal's control over Cubela's CIA contacts could not have been coincidental. This information told us that he was already part of the plans in progress. Bernal would play a significant role in organizing Cubela's contact with Manuel Artime in 1964.

The following information, also obtained from the CIA inspector general's report, states that on October 11, 1963:

[Censored] cabled that Cubela was insistent upon meeting with a senior US official, preferably Robert F. Kennedy, for assurances of US moral support for any activity that Cubela undertook in Cuba. [Censored] said that the answer Cubela received might be crucial to the CIA's relationship with Cubela. [Censored] recommended that "highest and profound consideration be given as feeling drawn by all who in contact Cubela is that he determined attempt op against Castro with or without US support."

In the same report another cable dated October 13, although unclear and confusing, makes it clear that Desmond FitzGerald, chief of the Cuba task force, sought out a person at headquarters whose name is censored to discuss the final details of the exchange with AM/LASH.

According to Cubela's statement, on October 29 the interview with a US government official went ahead. The official was introduced as a senator and Robert Kennedy's envoy. The CIA inspector general's report states that the interview took place at the house of the chief of the Paris station.

Cubela explained later that the envoy told him that he was a politician acting on behalf of Robert Kennedy and had come to confirm that the US government was disposed to back him in any operations in Cuba, such as the planned uprising or any other undertaking. Cubela recalled having insisted that he needed a high-powered rifle fitted with a telescopic lens to effect his plan to assassinate Fidel Castro from a distance, as well as other military supplies. A few weeks later, it was agreed to locate the arms in Cuba via the AM/TRUNK recruit Ramón Guín, who owned a farm close to the sea on the northern coast of Matanzas province. The CIA inspector general's report records the October 29 encounter as follows:

Desmond FitzGerald, then Chief, SAS, who was going to Paris on other business, arranged to meet with Cubela to give him the assurances he sought. The meeting was held in [Censored]'s house in Paris on 29 October 1963. FitzGerald used the alias [Censored]. [Censored] acted as interpreter. [Censored] was not present during the meeting. [Censored] on 13 November 1963 wrote a memorandum for the record of the meeting. It reads, in part: "FitzGerald informed Cubela that the United States is prepared to render all necessary assistance to any anticommunist Cuban group which succeeds in neutralizing the present Cuban leadership and assumes sufficient control to invite the United States to render the assistance it is prepared to give. It was emphasized that the above support will be forthcoming only after a real coup has been effected and the group involved is in a position to request US (probably under OAS auspices) recognition and support. It was made clear that the US was not prepared to commit itself to supporting an isolated uprising, as such an uprising can be extinguished in a matter of hours if the present government is still in control of Havana. As for the post-coup period, the US does not desire that the political clock be turned back but will support the necessary economic and political reforms which will benefit the mass of the Cuban people."

It is clear in this CIA report that the plan for FitzGerald's contact with Cubela anticipated the former introducing himself as a representative of Robert F. Kennedy, and that he had traveled to Paris with the specific intention of contacting Cubela and offering him the assurance of total US support in the case of a change of government in Cuba.

According to FitzGerald, he discussed the planned contact with Cubela with Richard Helms, CIA deputy director of plans, who decided it was not necessary to ask for Robert Kennedy's approval of FitzGerald speaking on his behalf.

On November 14, 1963 — according to the report — an unidentified person revealed Cubela's reaction to his contact with FitzGerald, to the effect that while he was satisfied by the political content, he was not pleased at their failure to hand over the necessary weapons. That person was José Luis González Gallarreta, who acted as Cubela's contact in Madrid and who had met with him during that time.



For us the Cubela-FitzGerald interview was significant in itself. On the one hand, Helms made no request for express authorization to speak on behalf of Attorney General Robert Kennedy; on the other, it is evident that the meeting included a discussion of plans to assassinate Fidel Castro.

Did somebody intend to give Cubela the impression that Robert Kennedy and his brother, the US president, had approved an assassination plot against the Cuban leader? One aspect that particularly struck us was a report on FitzGerald's reaction after he heard that Kennedy had been assassinated. According to a CIA source:

[FitzGerald] was under terrible stress that fall... Before leaving for Paris to meet with AM/LASH he had put his Georgetown house up for sale and sold his Jaguar... that stress intensified that November weekend.

CIA counterintelligence experts were working day and night to find out who, in addition to Oswald, had recently met with Kostikov, the KGB agent in Mexico City. One of the names on the list was Rolando Cubela... Sunday lunchtime, FitzGerald was at home watching television when Ruby killed Oswald... His wife Barbara was shocked to see her husband crying... "Now," Des said, "we will never know..."

A November 19, 1963, memo appears in the CIA inspector general's report, noting:

C/SAS [FitzGerald] approved telling Cubela he would be given a cache inside Cuba. Cache could, if he requested it, include... high-powered rifles w/scopes... C/SAS requested written reports on AM/LASH operation be kept to a minimum.

Cubela informed the Cuban authorities that on November 19, 1963, he received directions from the officer attending him to postpone his journey back to Cuba until the 22nd of that month for a meeting with him on that date, "coincidentally" the day of the assassination of President Kennedy.

Cubela's passport showed that he had a visa dated November 19

to travel to Prague. Cubela agreed to remain in Paris until November 22. The date of his case officer's request coincides with FitzGerald's official authorization of the high-powered rifle and the telescopic lens. But these would not be offered.

Cubela informed the Cuban authorities that he met with the case officer in the evening of November 22, who explained that he had been in Washington and showed him a transmitter that he wanted to give him. Cubela responded that he was not a spy and knew nothing of economic data. "He also wanted to give me a ballpoint pen that fired bullets and showed me a hypodermic needle containing poison, both to be used in the assassination attempt." Cubela continued:

In the middle of the meeting they called him by phone [referring to the case officer]. When he returned he told me: "They've just killed the president, they've just killed Kennedy. There's an order to postpone the interview until further notice," and that I should stay in Paris awaiting fresh instructions.

According to the CIA report, the CIA inspector general managed to reconstruct certain aspects of the AM/LASH project starting from November 20, 1963, through the testimony of Dr. Gunn — chief of the CIA Technical Services Division — and other persons whom he lists:

[Censored] says that, while Cubela was anxious to do away with Castro, Cubela was not willing to sacrifice his own life in exchange for Castro's. What Cubela really wanted was a high-powered, silenced rifle with an effective range of hundreds or thousands of yards. Cubela finally said that, as a doctor of medicine (which he was), he was quite sure that we could devise some technical means of doing the job that would not automatically cause him to lose his own life in the try.

Samuel Halpern and [Censored] approached Dr. Gunn for assistance. Although none of the participants specifically so stated, it may be inferred that they were seeking a means of assassination of a sort that Cubela might reasonably have been expected to have devised himself. What they settled upon was Black Leaf 40, a common, easily obtainable insecticide containing about 40 percent nicotine sulphate. Nicotine is a deadly poison...

The plan reached the action stage when Halpern and [Censored] contacted Gunn again on the morning of 20 November 1963 and told him that the device for administering the poison (a ballpoint pen rigged as a hypodermic syringe) had to be ready in time for [Censored] to catch a plane at noon the next day... He delivered the workable device to [Censored] the following morning and retained two of the latest prototypes. He states that they are still in his safe. He does not know what happened to the device he gave [Censored]; he does not remember its having been returned to him. He believes he was told that Cubela refused to accept the device. He says he would not now be able to differentiate the final pen from the earlier prototypes that are in his safe.

On the November 22 meeting, the same CIA report says:

[Censored] arrived in Paris in the morning of 22 November and met with Cubela late that afternoon. [Censored] states that he showed the pen/syringe to Cubela and explained how it worked. He is not sure, but he believes that Cubela accepted the device but said that he would not take it to Cuba with him. [Censored] distinctly recalls that Cubela didn't think much of the device. Cubela said that, as a doctor, he knew all about Black Leaf 40 and that we surely could come up with something more sophisticated than that...

Cubela said that he was returning to Cuba fully determined to pursue his plans to initiate a coup against Castro. [Censored] reiterated the assurances given Cubela by FitzGerald of full US support if a real coup against the Castro regime were successful. Cubela asked for the following items to be included in a cache inside Cuba: 20 hand grenades, two high-powered rifles with telescopic sights, and approximately 20 pounds of C-4 explosive and related equipment. Cubela suggested the best place for the cache was on the *finca* (farm) managed by his friend, [Censored]. Since he was returning to Cuba by way of Prague, he did not want to carry S/W [secret writing materials] or any other incriminating materials with him. As they were coming out of the meeting, [Censored] and Cubela were informed that President Kennedy had been assassinated. Cubela was visibly moved over the news. He asked, "Why do such things happen to good people?" The contact report does not state

the time nor the duration of the [Censored]-Cubela meeting, but it is likely that at the very moment President Kennedy was shot a CIA officer was meeting with a Cuban agent in Paris and giving him an assassination device for use against Castro.

[Censored] states that he received an OPIM cable from FitzGerald that night or early the next morning telling him that everything was off. We do not find such a cable in the AM/LASH file. There is a record in the file that [Censored] was due to arrive back in Washington at 1810 hours, 23 November.

Given all this, it would seem reasonable to believe that the report attempts to conceal evidence that could have been crucial to the investigation, such as:

1. Not giving the time and duration of the interview.
2. Not clarifying if Cubela received the "pen" or the specific plan agreed for its use.
3. Not referring to the cable sent by FitzGerald to the case officer with concrete instructions to act.

A comment in the report by the CIA inspector general notes:

The AM/LASH project was probably about as widely known within the Clandestine Services as any other project of a similar nature. However, we can identify only four people who know of the just-described episode involving a hypodermic syringe and Black Leaf 40. [Censored] knew all of the story, Halpern knew most of it, and Gunn knew much of it. FitzGerald did not mention this aspect of the Cubela operation when he first briefed us on it. When we went back to him later with specific questions, he said he remembered something about Black Leaf 40, but nothing whatever about a device for administering it. Gunn said he had the impression that FitzGerald knew about the operation but "didn't want to know." [Censored] says that FitzGerald knew that he and Halpern were seeing Gunn. Halpern agrees, but adds that FitzGerald did not know the specifics of the fabricating of an assassination device.

In our view, in addition to the persons mentioned in the above commentary, Richard Helms was aware of the manufacture of that sophisticated instrument of death and the plan being developed to use Cubela at an opportune moment. It is possible that the CIA inspector general's reference to the individual who knew of the whole plan was Helms himself.

On Sunday November 24, the AM/LASH case officer arrived at the CIA headquarters in Washington, and that same day, in response to a request from that center for the names of all known contacts of Soviet intelligence officers in Mexico City, the CIA station there sent a list of names, including that of Rolando Cubela .

David Atlee Phillips, who, as already mentioned, headed the anti-Cuba operative group, was located in Mexico City. He was one of the authors of all the disinformation that was circulated after Kennedy's death in relation to Lee Harvey Oswald's visit to the Cuban and Soviet consuls in Mexico, and probably masterminded the media campaigns attempting to involve Cuba in the assassination. It was probably also Phillips who released the information that Cubela was in contact with Soviet intelligence officers. Thus there was a written record that in the future could be used to raise doubts about the Cubela-CIA conspiracy that was happening in the same time period, but in a completely different place: France.

Another important aspect to bear in mind is that David Sánchez Morales, "El Indio," was chief of operations at JM/WAVE, the launchpad for the plan of aggression against Cuba, and in that role was coordinator of Phillips's actions in Mexico.

In that context the story could be a different one from that recounted by the CIA general inspector in his report, in which he attempted to play down the plot to assassinate Fidel Castro with the "poison pen."

Could this be because that operation was linked to the assassination of President Kennedy and other later CIA undertakings against Cuba, which met with setbacks or failed for unknown reasons? It is possible that all the delays in Cubela's return to Cuba were related to this.

Cubela returned to Havana via Prague on November 28, 1963, and

did not leave the country again until early November 1964, when he traveled to Paris to make contact with his case officer on December 6 and 7. Subsequently, as part of an autonomous operation together with Manuel Artime, Cubela was to revamp the assassination and counter-revolutionary plots that would eventually be dismantled by the Cuban security forces in 1966.

## **Part Two**

# **The Assassination of a President**





# The Lone Assassin

Immediately after the assassination of President Kennedy it was evident that certain political forces in the United States were publicly attempting to hold Cuba responsible. The US media lost no time in highlighting that the alleged assassin was a Castro sympathizer with a long history as a communist aspirant.

In addition, as if following a predetermined script, an article by AP journalist Daniel Harker, suggesting Cuban complicity, was widely reproduced. The Soviet Union came in for its share of blame for the crime as well, but it was obvious that the balance inclined toward so-called “Castro-communist responsibility” for the assassination.

The Cuban response was forceful, and in a speech on November 23, 1963, Fidel Castro countered the accusation in detail. Just as it did after the acts of terrorism in New York and Washington on September 11, 2001, Cuba revealed to the world its transparent position and condemned the guilty parties.

Precisely for those reasons, we committed ourselves to the task of reconstructing the subversive activities of the United States and the Miami Cuban mafia at that time, including the conspiracy to assassinate Fidel Castro and its connection to the Dallas killing.

Years later, in the wake of the Church Commission and the US House of Representatives Committee investigations, some important US researchers questioned the conclusions of the Warren Commission and its lone assassin theory from various angles, offering new elements and leads, some of which pointed to the US intelligence services and exiled

Cubans as significant suspects in the criminal conspiracy. Reviewing these elements allowed us to advance further into this investigation and discover new leads into that labyrinth. One day, when the United States decides to declassify the information related to the labyrinth, the public might discover the truth: that one of the key elements related to the Kennedy assassination was the aggression towards Cuba and its revolution.

Immediately after the Dallas crime, the figure of Lee Harvey Oswald emerged as the lone assassin, in parallel with the notion of an attempted revenge attack by Fidel Castro for the dozens of CIA-sponsored homicide plots against his person, many of them planned with the acquiescence of the highest echelons of the US administration.

Statements to the press confirming that Oswald was a veteran communist, "evidence" of a visit he made to the Cuban embassy in Mexico, letters from Cuba compromising the alleged "assassin" as the executor of orders from Havana, and "evidence" linking him to the US Communist Party (CPUSA) and the Fair Play for Cuba Committee (FPCC) solidarity organization were published in the major US media. The aim was to demonstrate the existence of a Castro conspiracy to assassinate the US president, with Oswald as the instrument.

After analyzing the origins of that media campaign, we came to the conclusion that it was an inextricable part of the plot against President Kennedy.

Thus Lee Harvey Oswald constituted an essential aspect of our investigation from the outset, from his return from the Soviet Union in 1962 up until his death in Dallas, Texas, on November 24, 1963. When we decided to reopen the investigation, everything concerning his publicized "links" with Cuba and his past activities was reviewed, leading us to the following hypotheses:

1. Oswald was an agent of the US intelligence services, infiltrated into the Soviet Union to fulfill a mission.
2. On his return from the Soviet Union, Oswald continued working for the US security services.

3. Oswald moved to New Orleans in April 1963 and formed links with Cuban organizations and exiles.
4. In New Orleans Oswald received instructions to "convert" himself into a sympathizer with the Cuban revolution.
5. Between July and September 1963, Oswald created evidence that he was part of a Cuba-related conspiracy.
6. In the fall of 1963 Oswald met with a CIA officer and an agent of Cuban origin in Dallas, Texas, to plan a covert operation related to Cuba.
7. In September 1963, Oswald met with the Dallas Alpha 66 group and tried to compromise exiled Cuban Silvia Odio.
8. Oswald attempted to travel to Cuba from Mexico.
9. Oswald was to receive compromising correspondence from Havana linking him to the Cuban intelligence service.
10. The mass media, directed by the CIA's "Cuban American Mechanism," was primed to unleash a far-reaching campaign to demonstrate to the US public that Cuba and Fidel Castro were responsible for the assassination.

Investigating these suppositions provided a volume of information, and evidence corroborating the parallel nature of the plans of aggression against Cuba and the Kennedy assassination.

## A Historical Premonition

On November 22, 1963, at 12:30 p.m., US President John F. Kennedy was assassinated in Dealey Plaza. Minutes later police agent J.D. Tippit was gunned down while on a routine patrol. Shortly after that, between 1:45 and 1:55 p.m., police sirens sounded outside the Texas Theater, where Lee Harvey Oswald was arrested and charged with murdering President Kennedy.

Two days later, on November 24, at 11:21 p.m., Oswald was killed by a gangster, Jack Ruby,<sup>1</sup> who gunned him down in the basement of the Dallas police headquarters as Oswald was about to be transferred to the county jail. At his trial, Ruby's defense argued that he acted to spare Kennedy's widow further suffering.

From that moment, a massive campaign was unleashed in the US media, presenting Lee Harvey Oswald as a communist and an active sympathizer with the Cuban revolution. Information was leaked to the press naming him as an agent of the Cuban security services, instructed to effect the assassination as an act of revenge by Fidel Castro for similar actions planned by the CIA against his person. That information was based on a statement the Cuban leader made to AP journalist Daniel Harker on September 8 of that year in the Brazilian embassy in Havana. The news dispatch, evidently twisted, presented Fidel Castro's words as a threat and emphasized: "The US leaders are in danger if they support any attempt to do away with Cuban leaders... we are prepared to fight

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1. Jacob Rubenstein, alias Jack Ruby, see Appendix 1.

and respond in the same manner. The US leaders should realize that if they are supporting plots to eliminate Cuban leaders, they themselves will not be spared..."

This false report was based on an encounter between the revolutionary leader and the journalist during a diplomatic reception. It was widely circulated at the time, and after the assassination served as part of the "evidence" of Cuban complicity. This was compounded by a series of statements by groups under the wing of the CIA, such as the counterrevolutionary DRE and the Anticommunist Brigade, headed by Manuel Salvat and Frank Sturgis respectively, which offered information on Oswald's alleged activities with Cuban intelligence personnel in New Orleans, Miami, and Mexico City.

Oswald's background was made public virtually from the moment of the crime. His communist "sympathies" during his military service in the marines were divulged, as was his defection to the Soviet Union in 1959 and his association in the spring of 1963 with the FPCC in New Orleans, where he engaged in confrontations and debates with "anti-Castroites" in defense of the Cuban revolution. Furthermore, there was his alleged contact with a Cuban agent at the Cuban embassy in Mexico — presumably the person who ordered him to commit the crime for which he would be paid a significant sum of money.

Curiously, during the investigative commission appointed by President Lyndon B. Johnson, headed by Earl Warren, president of the Supreme Court of Justice, the press campaign charging Cuba and the Soviet Union with the assassination virtually disappeared.

The Warren Commission worked for nearly one year, and then concluded that Lee Harvey Oswald had been the sole assassin of the president, excluding the possibility of an internal or foreign conspiracy.

On November 23, when the echoes of the shots that ended the life of President John F. Kennedy were still resounding and international public opinion was reeling in shock, Fidel Castro spoke on Cuban national television and radio to give his initial reaction to the event.

His analysis at that time contained elements that to this day constitute

vital keys to understanding what happened. In that speech, Fidel went into the origins of the conflicts created by the Kennedy administration's policies, particularly its relations with the extreme right, including the Cuban exile groups. After the Bay of Pigs defeat and the conclusion of the October Missile Crisis, the perception of those groups was that their plans for a US invasion of Cuba, the restoration of their interests and privileges, and the overturning of the social conquests obtained by the Cuban people had been betrayed.

Fidel Castro argued:

Neither the former Eisenhower administration nor the Kennedy administration has exactly practiced a friendly policy toward us. The policy of both administrations has been characterized by its aggressive, hostile, and implacable spirit towards our country...

Nonetheless, the news of the assassination of the US president is very grave and bad news...

Bad news, even if we leave to one side the human problem, in which human sensibility — anybody's sensibility — is always affected by an act of that nature, in the face of a crime, in the face of an assassination. What I am saying is that, even though I have left those questions to one side, I always react, and I am sure that the vast majority of human beings always react, with repudiation in the face of assassination, in the face of crime...

We cannot consider that as a correct weapon of struggle. We should not consider it...

We can state that within the United States there are elements that are defending an ultra-reactionary policy in all fields, both international and national. And those are the only elements that could possibly benefit from the events that occurred yesterday in the United States...

Kennedy was coming under heavy attack from the most reactionary circles, from the most belligerent circles...

One of the errors of Kennedy's policy in relation to Cuba was having played into his enemies' hands. For example: taking up those invasion plans against us that the Republican administration had organized...

All of this gave rise to a policy of blackmail on the part of

Republicans in the United States. In other words, Kennedy placed the weapon of Cuba in the Republicans' hands. Like having pursued the aggressive policy of the Republicans, who then used it as a political weapon against him...

So we have a series of things that were the source of constant criticism by those ultra-right sectors. For example, the problem of Cuba, the commitment that came out of the October Crisis not to invade Cuba, was one of the points of Kennedy's policy most consistently attacked by the ultra-reactionary sectors. The agreement to halt nuclear tests was likewise a heavily debated point within the United States, one which had the determined, ferocious opposition of the most ultra-reactionary elements in that country, who were totally against any such agreement...

The internal controversy was not characterized by the communists' fight with the government. It was not characterized by the fight with left-wing or liberal elements... The fight, the battle to the finish within the United States was being waged between the extreme right, the extreme reactionaries, and the more moderate elements...

A period of ferocious conflict was being experienced between the more moderate sectors, which included many of Kennedy's collaborators, and the ultra-reactionary sectors of US society...

A series of UPI [United Press International] campaigns, even against President Kennedy himself, which link that agency with the ultra-reactionary currents, show them interested in making the most of the situation because of their adventuristic and belligerent politics, or because those same circles are implicated in the assassination of President Kennedy...

In other words, right from the initial cables, there has been an attempt to insinuate Soviet Union and Cuban complicity...

And that was what began to make all this suspicious. Because it just so happened that in such an unthinkable thing as the assassination a guilty party should immediately appear; what a coincidence, he (Oswald) had gone to Russia, and what a coincidence, he was associated with the FPCC! That is what they began to say...

Thus a guilty party was immediately identified: a guilty party who had been in the Soviet Union, a guilty party who was a Cuba sympathizer...

It just so happens that these incidents are taking place precisely at a time when Kennedy was coming under heavy attack by those who felt that his policy on Cuba was weak... in other words, that they were the enemies of a policy of that kind, the only ones interested in the death of President Kennedy and the only ones that perhaps could have received the news of Kennedy's death with satisfaction.

They went all out to publish condemnations of Kennedy's speech in Florida. Because the speech that Kennedy made in Florida was disappointing for those elements in favor of an aggressive policy toward Cuba, it was disappointing for the counterrevolutionary elements, it was disappointing for the belligerent elements in the United States.

They listened when the president said that "we in the hemisphere must utilize all the resources at our disposition to prevent the establishing of another Cuba in this hemisphere..." In other words, they do not accept that notion of preventing another Cuba being established because, for them, this implies accepting that one Cuba exists...

Who are the beneficiaries of that assassination, who could have been the sole beneficiaries of that assassination? Those in favor of an invasion of Cuba, the partisans of a policy bordering on warfare, the partisans of war, the enemies of peace, the enemies of the rights of blacks in the United States, the worst enemies of the blacks in the United States, the worst enemies of the progressive and liberal elements in the United States...

It is in the interests of the US people and all the peoples of the world that what is really behind the assassination of Kennedy should be revealed, demanded, that the facts should be clarified: whether it concerns an innocent or a sick individual,<sup>2</sup> or if he was an instrument of reaction, the agent of a macabre plot to carry out a policy of aggression, to place the US government at the mercy of the most aggressive circles, the monopolies, militarism, and the worst agencies of the United States...

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2. A reference to the alleged assassin Oswald.



Clearly, there had been a national conspiracy in the United States to eliminate President Kennedy. At the center of that conspiracy were those who had the motive, the means, and the possibilities to effect such an action: the US authorities themselves, and government agencies and subversive and criminal agencies like the CIA, the FBI, military intelligence, and the so-called organized crime syndicates could not be excluded.

Various US investigations have delved in this direction over the years, and have contributed information that increasingly confirms Fidel Castro's suspicions.

Thus we propose entering that labyrinth, while being aware of the fact that the crime can only be definitively clarified when the US authorities reveal everything they know, given that Cuba was only a victim of the conspiracy, and not a perpetrator.

## The Hypothesis

Who the assassins were, and even more importantly, what political and economic forces were behind the assassination, are still to be determined, although new evidence pointing to those responsible is constantly appearing.

Over the years, since the end of 1964 when we investigated the AM/LASH operation to assassinate Fidel Castro and unleash a military attack on Cuba at the same time as the Dallas shooting, the issue of Oswald seemed to us to be essential. Who was he and what was his assigned place in the conspiracy, the existence of which nobody now doubts? Although not clarifying the executive aspects of the crime, various key answers have emerged in response to those questions, some of them already posed in one way or another by other investigators.<sup>1</sup>

Thus, Oswald was the linchpin to our investigation. We became aware that he was the key to the puzzle that the US establishment was attempting to conceal from us. We examined all the public information, every detail, and all the news reports of that period to discover their interrelation, and concluded:

1. Lee Harvey Oswald was assigned a fundamental role in the conspiracy, one related to implicating the Cuban government in the crime, an essential element for justifying the assassination of Fidel Castro and spurring the US army into an invasion of Cuba.

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1. For example: Jim Garrison in *On the Trail of the Assassins*, and Gaeton Fonzi in *The Last Investigation*.

2. There was a high degree of complicity between the president's killers and those we have labeled the CIA and Mafia's "Cuban American Mechanism," given their active role in documenting Oswald's activities as a "pro-Castro" sympathizer and instrument of the crime, and their leading role in the media campaigns launched immediately after the assassination with the objective of incriminating Cuba.
3. The assassination of the president involved a conspiracy of national dimensions, and those carrying out the plan were not its primary instigators, but rather part of a whole network involved in coordinating all the details, including the route of the presidential convoy, the fatal shots, the elimination of all evidence, and the laying of responsibility on Oswald, and by extension, Cuba.

Another aspect that became evident to us was the fact that the attempt to incriminate Cuba, involving Oswald as the key piece, was conducted in various stages, all of them involving Cuban exiles in one way or another, and covering three countries: the United States, Mexico, and Cuba.

The first stage consisted in endowing Oswald with credentials as a "sympathizer of the Cuban revolution," which could be utilized at the appropriate moment. The second was to provide evidence that Oswald was a sworn enemy of Kennedy, whom he saw as an obstacle to "solving the Cuban case." The third was to involve Oswald in some way with the Cuban embassy in Mexico, and the fourth was to have Oswald travel to Cuba — even if only for a few days — in order to use his trip as further evidence of Cuban participation in the assassination. The fifth was to document Oswald's relations with the Cuban intelligence services, and the sixth and final stage was to utilize the five preceding ones in a plan for a concerted media blitz to demonstrate Cuba's complicity in the assassination of President John F. Kennedy.

The central objective of our investigations was to discover who Oswald was, his background, his links to the Cuban exile movement, and the events in which he participated during the final months of

his life. We realized that the Gordian knot of the conspiracy that led to the Dallas shooting was to be found in the clarification of those questions.

## History of a Provocateur

On October 24, 1956, Lee Harvey Oswald enlisted as a volunteer in the US Marine Corps. The following year he was dispatched to the Atsugi base in Japan, a naval air station from which U-2 aircraft took off on reconnaissance missions over Chinese and Soviet territory. In that period, those espionage flights were one of the CIA's most jealously guarded secrets. According to what we know, Oswald worked on the flight radar support equipment and thus had access to top secret information. To meet the demands of the job he was trained as a radio-telegraph operator, and he completed that technical training with classes in Russian, in order to carry out his assignment to Soviet publications in the Japanese base.

James B. Wilcott, a former CIA officer stationed in Japan during that time, testified before the House Select Committee in 1978:

Lee Harvey Oswald was a favorite subject. He had been trained at the Atsugi naval air station, a super-secret special operations base for the CIA Tokyo station.

As I understood it, Mr. Branch headed the direction and expert orientation of the executive. The U-2 flights developed from there were also a major CIA project.

Oswald was recruited from the military division with the evident objective of turning him into a double agent against the Soviet Union... it was said that they had some kind of special control over him... and that perhaps, as the speculations [among CIA personnel] went, they had discovered during a routine lie-detector test that he

had killed somebody or committed a serious crime. The CIA taught him Russian and it was said that he had been in “the Farm.”<sup>1</sup>

The writer Henry Hurt, in his work *Reasonable Doubt*, noted that Gerry Patrick Hemming’s time in Japan coincided with that of Oswald. Hemming was a veteran CIA agent who was in Cuba during the early months of 1959 and subsequently took part in operations against the revolutionary government. Moreover, according to some of the aforementioned investigators, he was suspected of having participated in the Dallas shooting.

Dick Russell, another US investigator, explains in his book *The Man Who Knew Too Much* that Richard Case Nagell, then a covert agent with the military intelligence services, was attempting to recruit Colonel Nikolai Eroshin, the Soviet military attaché in Japan, presumably a Soviet military intelligence (GRU) agent. He was joined in that task by another soldier from the same base, Lee Harvey Oswald, who, as the book also mentions, had been photographed with Colonel Eroshin in the vicinity of the Soviet embassy by the Japanese police. If that information is accurate, it confirms that Oswald was working for one of the US intelligence services from the outset.

In November 1958, Oswald was dispatched to the El Toro Marine Corps Air Station in California, where he served until September 1959.

Nelson Delgado, one of Oswald’s fellow soldiers at the base, informed the Warren Commission that he did not recall Oswald having any Marxist inclinations whatsoever and that he was not an accurate shot; he even added that Oswald had problems obtaining the basic qualification.

Delgado confirmed that Oswald traveled to Los Angeles on various occasions with “the proposition of visiting the Cuban consulate.” He related that very late one night when he and Oswald were on guard duty, a call came through from the control point informing Oswald that he had

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1. A reference to the CIA training center at Camp Peary.

a visitor at the entrance. He stated that the visitor had to be a civilian, as otherwise he would have been allowed to enter. Delgado recounted that he had to find somebody to relieve Oswald. An hour later he passed the main entrance and saw Oswald having a heated discussion with a man wearing a raincoat. He thought it was odd that someone would be wearing an overcoat on a hot California night. Although Oswald did not tell him at that point who the stranger was, he had an idea that he was in some way connected with the Cuban issue. According to the testimony of Gerry Patrick Hemming, his former Atsugi friend, it was he who visited Oswald that night.

Daniel Powers, who was with Oswald throughout his service in the marines, informed the Warren Commission that the latter had never expressed any sympathy for communist or socialist ideas or for the communist party.

At his own request, Oswald asked for a discharge from active service in the Marine Corps in September 1959, three months before his official termination date. His request was based on the fact that his mother was sick. One week later, on September 20, he left for New Orleans.

Oddly, a few days later he took a ship to Britain, where according to his passport, he stayed until October 10, from where he traveled directly to Finland and crossed the Soviet border as a tourist. He reached Moscow on October 16, 1959. Five days later he staged a suicide attempt to oblige the Soviet authorities to grant him permission to stay. He was admitted to a Moscow hospital until October 28 as a result of his self-inflicted injuries.

On October 31, he presented himself to Richard E. Snyder, second secretary and consul at the US embassy. Snyder was a CIA agent who had also been dispatched to Japan. There, Oswald apparently announced his defection to the Soviet Union and stated that he would hand over to that country the secret information to which he had access during his time in the marines.

During his stay in Moscow, Oswald met with US journalist Priscilla Johnson and talked with her for more than five hours on November 13 and 16. There is considerable evidence to indicate that Ms. Johnson was

a CIA agent who was seen “by chance” some years later in the company of Marina Oswald, Lee’s wife, when the latter found a bus ticket bought by her husband when he visited Mexico City in the fall of 1963.

In his book *Plausible Denial*, author Mark Lane presents some proof of this journalist’s relation to the CIA. He reveals that she was the person who facilitated the defection of Svetlana, Stalin’s daughter, from the Soviet Union, and later explains that CIA report No. 646277 states in still visible writing (there was an attempt to erase it) that Priscilla Johnson was employed by the CIA as a part-time employee in the US embassy on two occasions during her stay in the Soviet Union.

Researcher John Newman presents a similar version in his work *Oswald and the CIA*. According to him, the Agency’s interest in Priscilla Johnson was renewed in 1956 when she was in the Soviet Union as a translator at the US embassy. After a brief stay in Paris, she returned to Moscow in June 1958 as a reporter for the *New York Times* and the *North American Newspaper Alliance*. On November 16 of that year, John McVickar, a US consular official in Moscow, sent her to the hotel where Oswald was staying with the objective of influencing him to abandon his idea of defection.

Oswald’s application for revocation of his US citizenship presented to Snyder was never made effective. The Soviet authorities finally granted Oswald residency in December 1959.

At our request, on January 5, 1977, Major General Piotr Voronin, the KGB representative in Cuba, handed over the following material:

Oswald, Lee Harvey, born 1939 in New Orleans. His father was an insurance agent who died in 1939. His mother moved with Oswald to the city of Fort Worth in Texas, where they resided at the following address: 3124 West, 5th Avenue. In October 1956 Oswald signed up for military service and was enlisted as a soldier in naval aviation.

During his military service in the city of Jacksonville, from March 18 to May 5, 1957, he took a course specializing in electronics at the Naval Air Technical Training Center and then, until June 19 of that year, took an operator’s course in radar installations at the Keesler Air Force Base.

Oswald withdrew from military service on September 11, 1959,



in the city of Santa Ana, California, and left for Europe.

He arrived in Moscow as a tourist on October 16, 1959. Shortly afterwards he applied for Soviet citizenship. In his request, Oswald wrote that he considered himself a communist by conviction and saw no prospect at all for his life in the United States. After obtaining a negative response to his application he attempted to commit suicide. On November 21, 1959, he was found in the bath at his hotel, unconscious and with the vein of his left hand slashed. Beside him was a note with the following content: "I have made this lengthy voyage to find death, but I love life."

Oswald was taken to a Moscow hospital where he was given the necessary medical attention.

On his own initiative Oswald visited the US embassy on October 31, 1959, and stated that he was renouncing his citizenship and would remain in the Soviet Union.

In January 1960 the relevant Soviet agencies granted Oswald residency. He was sent to the city of Minsk, where he began to work in his specialty in a radio factory.

Shortly afterwards Oswald desisted from his idea of adopting Soviet citizenship. He began to demonstrate dissatisfaction at his material situation and working conditions to the workers and employees at the radio factory and regretted his decision to remain in the Soviet Union.

In Minsk, Oswald met Soviet citizen Prusakova Marina Nikolaevna, born in 1941 in the city of Severo-Dvinska in the Arjaneglsk region. He married her on April 30, 1961, and they had a daughter.

In the spring of 1962 the couple decided to return to the United States. Oswald obtained passports for himself and his family at the US embassy in Moscow and on June 2, 1962, they left the Soviet Union.

On March 17, 1963, M.N. Oswald-Prusakova, who lived with her husband in the city of Dallas, Texas, presented the Soviet consulate in the United States with an application to return to the Soviet Union to reside there permanently. A similar petition was made by Oswald himself in October of that year at the Soviet embassy in Mexico. Both were refused entry to the Soviet Union.

In November 1963, Oswald sent a letter to the Soviet embassy in

Washington stating that he had fallen into the sights of the FBI, apparently because he was the secretary of the New Orleans FPCC.

On November 22, 1963, Oswald was detained by the US police on suspicion of the assassination of President Kennedy, and the following day was gunned down by Jack Ruby.

Subsequently, at the request of the US authorities, the Soviet ambassador in the United States handed over copies of Oswald's correspondence with the Soviet consulate in Washington to Secretary of State Dean Rusk. In 1964, the material on Oswald's stay in the Soviet Union was placed at the disposal of the US government.

The State Security Committee had no operative interest in Oswald and his wife.

Signed: Pedro.

In May 1989, while on a working visit to the Soviet Union, I met up in Moscow with an old friend, Pavel Iatskov ("Pablo"), colonel of the First Directorate of the KGB. I knew from earlier accounts that Pablo was in Mexico City when Oswald traveled there in the fall of 1963 to apply for a visa to visit the Soviet Union. It was an issue that continued to interest me and that was why I arranged the meeting with Pablo, who was by then retired.

It was a very warm meeting. In the 1970s and early 1980s we had coincided in Havana and Managua, where Iatskov was acting as chief representative of the KGB. After reminiscing about old acquaintances, we moved on to the issue at hand, and this is what Pablo recounted:

I was in Mexico City when Lee Harvey Oswald visited our embassy to apply for a visa. In fact, he wanted to visit Havana and went to your embassy to ask for the relevant permit, which was refused, as he should have had the Soviet visa, given that that was his [final] destination. My meeting with him was fortuitous. It was a Saturday and I was planning to have a game of volleyball with my comrades when I received news from the consulate guard that a North American was insisting on an interview with a Soviet official.

I attended to him and he told a strange story. He said that he had been in the Soviet Union and was married to a Soviet woman, with whom he had two children. He said he was a member of the CPUSA and a Cuba support committee.

I explained to him that he had to make an official application, but that the authorization of any visa to US citizens was granted in Moscow, and the procedure took from four to six months.

When I told him this, he seemed very upset and left without even filling in the form. To me it all whiffed of a provocation, and I immediately informed Moscow of the incident.

Shortly afterwards, the assassination of Kennedy occurred and [Oswald] was the sole suspect. When I returned to Moscow, possibly on the following year's vacation, I discussed the Oswald case with various friends who worked in the Second Directorate (Counterintelligence), and they confirmed that Oswald had been in the Soviet Union in late 1959, but that they had nothing to do with his case, and that maybe he was one of ours (KGB or GRU). However, it was said that he had proffered information that was very important to Soviet state security, for which reason he was granted temporary residence. A few months later, he began to proclaim a wish to return to the United States, and they supposed that the GRU First Directorate was in charge of the matter.

At the end of the 1970s, when the investigation into the Kennedy assassination was reopened, I was in Moscow, and at one point, during a discussion at the center on the Kennedy assassination among various high-ranking officers from my directorate, one of them commented that Oswald had been a US intelligence agent and that his defection from the Soviet Union was intended as an active step to disrupt the growing political climate of detente between the two superpowers.

I asked Pablo if he believed that Oswald had been recruited by Soviet intelligence, to which he replied: "There was no doubt of that, as it was a GRU First Directorate practice to at least attempt an initial working agreement in all cases of citizens wishing to return to their countries of origin, and Oswald would not have been any exception."

We speculated on what information Oswald might have handed over to the KGB and agreed that it was probably related to the U-2 spy plane flights over Soviet territory. None of those flights took place during Oswald's asylum in the Soviet Union until May 1, 1960, a few weeks before the announced disarmament talks between Eisenhower

and Nikita Khrushchev, so it was highly suspicious that it was precisely the May 1 flight that was brought down by Soviet rockets, something they had been unable to undertake before. It was a really strange event that inevitably affected the summit between the two superpowers.

In February 1961, Oswald visited the US embassy in Moscow, once again met with Consul Snyder, and asked for permission to return to the United States with his family. The State Department authorized his return and informed the embassy he was to be granted a loan of \$435.71 for his travel costs. Oswald had a further meeting with Snyder on July 10, when it was determined that Oswald had not been expatriated and he was given his passport, which expired in September of that year. They also informed him that the State Department would make the decision on its renewal.

Finally, in August 1961, the State Department passport office authorized the US embassy in Moscow to renew Oswald's passport and gave him and his wife permission to enter the United States.

On January 11, 1962, the Soviet government authorized Marina Oswald-Prusakova's exit visa so that she could travel to the United States.

In June of that year, Oswald returned to New York with his family. He was received at the port by veteran CIA agent Spas T. Raikin, general secretary of the US Brothers of the Anti-Bolshevik Nations Inc., who also worked in the Foreigners' Aid Society.

## Texas and Dallas

On his return from the Soviet Union, Oswald installed himself in Fort Worth, Texas, and started work in the Leslie Welding Company, part of the sheet metal industry. He was interviewed by the FBI for the first time on June 26, 1962. Agents John W. Fain and B. Tom Carter asked him about his experiences in the Soviet Union and gave him instructions in the event of Soviet intelligence contacting him. A second interview was conducted on August 16 and the FBI agents concluded that Oswald did not represent any risk to security and was not potentially dangerous or violent, thus recommending that his case be filed. In that same month agent Fain retired and was replaced by James P. Hosty, Jr., who, according to his statement to the Warren Commission, reopened the Oswald file in October 1962. The motives mentioned by Hosty to reactivate the Oswald file were described by the Warren Commission as irrelevant and false.

Coincidentally, on October 7, 1962, Oswald was visited by Baron George De Mohrenschildt, a "White Russian" who was active within the Russian community in Dallas. The next day, Oswald packed up his belongings and moved to that city, where the De Mohrenschildt couple lived.

After installing himself there on October 9, Oswald instigated an active relationship with the Russian community in that city. He went to the Texas state unemployment office and took a general aptitude test, obtaining excellent results. One week later he had a job in a company supplying military maps to the Pentagon. This work required a top

security clearance due to the access to classified information, including maps on Cuba to be utilized by the U-2 spy planes that discovered the Soviet missile installations on the island in that same month.

The Warren Commission noted that Oswald was fired from that job on April 6, 1963, due to personal shortcomings.

After a visit to the De Mohrenschildt couple on April 13, 1963, Oswald decided on a change of scene and moved to New Orleans on April 24. He left his wife and children in Irving, Texas, in the house of Ruth Paine, who spoke fluent Russian. Her husband was an engineer at Bell Helicopter, one of the most important supply companies for the Pentagon.

## New Orleans

According to what is known, on his return to New Orleans Oswald linked up again with his old friend David Ferrie, who was working for a private detective agency headed by Guy Banister, a former FBI agent. Banister was also directing a CIA operation of clandestine missions in Cuba, working under the cover of an anti-Castro organization called Friends of Democratic Cuba.

A 1979 report from a Cuban intelligence source revealed that in April 1963, the Friends of Democratic Cuba was formed among the most extreme elements of the Cuban exile community, backed by the Mafia. The offices of the CRC and the headquarters of the Friends of Democratic Cuba were located in the same building as Banister's detective agency. Various local Cubans, including leaders Sergio Arcacha, Frank Bartes, and Carlos Bringuier, were visited there by CIA agents Orlando Bosch, Antonio Cuesta, Antonio Veciana, Luis Posada, Eladio del Valle, Manuel Salvat, and Manuel Villafaña, among others.

Another report from the same source, interrogated years later on this subject, stated that after Kennedy's assassination, he recognized Oswald as one of the people who, in mid-1963, was living in a CIA safe house on the outskirts of Miami. The informant had visited the house in search of his case officer and met there with various well-known Cubans. His case officer did not allow him to stay, which was the reason for his rapid departure.

In his investigations into the Kennedy assassination, attorney Jim Garrison discovered that David Ferrie frequented the Banister offices

during the summer of 1963, a fact also acknowledged by the House Select Committee investigation, which noted that in 1961, Ferrie worked with Banister and Sergio Arcacha to establish the Friends of Democratic Cuba, attached to the CRC. Banister was checking out members of the anti-Castro groups in search of potential Havana spies.

Delphine Roberts, Banister's secretary, stated that she had seen Oswald on various occasions in her boss's office at the end of August and the beginning of September 1963, a fact confirmed by investigator Jack Martin when he pointed out that Oswald was often in the ex-FBI agent's office with Ferrie.

Other elements that emerged later, such as the imprints on the pro-Castro pamphlets distributed by Oswald in New Orleans, also point to his relation with the Banister group. The address on the pamphlets was that of Banister's office and the headquarters of the CRC.

On August 5, 1963, Oswald visited Carlos Bringuier's store, the Casa Roca, stated that he wished to join his counterrevolutionary group, the DRE, and offered to contribute funds and training in guerrilla techniques, citing his experience as a marine. Fearing he was a provocateur or an FBI agent, after the assassination Bringuier stated that he had sent Oswald to his organization's office in Miami.

The following day, Oswald returned to the store and left a marines training manual there.

Bringuier told the local police that on August 9 he heard of a man distributing pro-Castro propaganda on Canal Street, so he went there with fellow exiles Celso Hernández and Miguel Cruz. When he saw that the person handing out the leaflets was Oswald, a fight ensued.

In her testimony, Marita Lorenz<sup>1</sup> said she participated in a meeting with various Cuban counterrevolutionaries in a house in Miami in October 1963, attended by Orlando Bosch, Gerry Patrick Hemming, the

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1. Marita Lorenz: CIA agent. Under Frank Sturgis's orders, she operated in Havana in 1959, and later from the Agency base located for a number of years in Miami. The references allude to a press interview she gave during the 1970s.



brothers Guillermo and Ignacio Novo Sampol, David Ferrie, Pedro Luis Díaz Lanz, and Lee Harvey Oswald, whom she knew on that occasion by his nickname "Ozzie." The group was discussing a trip to Dallas, a map of which was spread out on a table.

## A "Castro Sympathizer"

As soon as he was established in New Orleans, Oswald began to undertake public activities that would confirm him as an "ardent sympathizer" of the Cuban revolution. As part of that plan, he unsuccessfully tried to link up with the FPCC. In May 1963 he wrote to Vincent T. Lee, at that time the organization's national director, asking if he could start up a branch in New Orleans. Without receiving his approval, he printed flyers in the organization's name stamped "L.H. Oswald, 4907 Magazine Street, A.J. Hidell, P.O. Box 30016 and 544 Camp Street."

In another letter to Vincent T. Lee, Oswald expressed his intention to rent an office. With no positive response, he wrote to him again saying that he "had acquired a small room."

In June 1963 he applied for another US passport with the stated intention of traveling to Western Europe, the Soviet Union, Finland, and Poland. The passport office approved his application the following day.

At the end of June or early July, Oswald suggested to Marina that she should return to the Soviet Union as there was nothing to keep her in the United States. As a result of that conversation, Marina wrote to the Soviet embassy in Washington, referring to an application that she had made on February 17 that year asking for a return visa for herself and her daughter, and specifying that Oswald had to remain in the United States (although, according to Marina, she had acted at her husband's request). In a second letter, of July 1963, Marina informed the Soviet embassy that things were going better, as her husband wished to return

to the Soviet Union. What Marina did not know was that Oswald had attached a note to her letter, in which he asked the embassy to process his wife's visa rapidly, and added: "In terms of my return visa, I am asking you to consider it as a visa separate from that of my wife."

Oswald continued pressuring the president of the FPCC, and to gain his attention deliberately lied about the level of his activism on behalf of the organization, even mentioning that he was being persecuted for it. On August 1 he wrote a long letter to Vincent T. Lee stating, among other things, that the office rented by him as the committee's center had suddenly been closed down three days later for obscure reasons, the owners mentioning renovations, etc. "You will understand, of course," wrote Oswald, "thousands of flyers had been distributed and messages were constantly received through the post office box..." He said he was alone in his efforts, but the lack of sympathy for his movement in New Orleans was "the result of an attack on a public demonstration by certain Cuban exiles," during which he had been officially warned by the police.

On August 9 came the incident with Cuban exiles Carlos Bringuier and Celso Hernández, who "surprised" Oswald distributing pro-Cuba pamphlets and started an altercation, in which the police intervened and arrested the three of them. Only Oswald was fined. The money was paid by his uncle, a man linked to a Carlo Marcello, chief of the Mafia in that city. It is interesting to note that Oswald referred to that incident in his August 1 letter to Vincent T. Lee, eight days before it took place.

A few days later, William Stuckey, a journalist from the New Orleans WDSU radio station, interviewed Oswald on the incident and proposed a public debate with Carlos Bringuier on August 21. In that interview, Oswald declared himself a convinced Marxist and a Cuba sympathizer. A significant fact about this radio interview was that the moderator was Edward Butler, executive director of the Americas Information Council, the person who later unmasked Oswald as a former defector from the Soviet Union. On August 26, Butler handed over a recording of the debate to the FBI.

For his part, Carlos Bringuier instructed fellow Cuban exile Carlos

Quiroga to visit Oswald and find out more about his activities. Quiroga was a member of the DRE, and according to Cuban files, belonged to that organization's intelligence section.

After these events, Oswald's file now documented his "pro-Castro" affiliation, his relations with a solidarity organization, his ties with the CPUSA, and above all, his affirmation of being a "convinced Marxist" with sympathies for revolutionary Cuba — all this ready for the appropriate moment.

## The Accomplices

Marina Oswald testified before the Warren Commission that from August 21 to September 17 her husband spent most of his time reading and in rifle training. The House Select Committee investigators affirmed that Oswald moved about unnoticed in New Orleans. In this same period, however, there is evidence of Oswald showing up in Clinton, Louisiana, with two suspected CIA agents, Clay Shaw and David Ferrie.

In the fall of 1975, during an interview with CBS journalist Dan Rather, Robert McKeown, an arms smuggler and acquaintance of Jack Ruby, resident in a town near Dallas, stated that in the fall of 1963, Oswald visited his house accompanied by a Cuban named Hernández, whom he knew from his time in Havana. According to McKeown, the visit concerned the purchase of two Savage-300 rifles with telescopic sights.

In mid-September 1963, Oswald made an appearance at the Mexican consulate in New Orleans, where he asked for a tourist visa to visit that country.

From New Orleans he went to Dallas for a series of meetings. The "Silvia Odio incident," as the Warren Commission referred to this episode, occurred at the end of September 1963, when Silvia Odio received a visit at her home in Dallas from two Latinos (or possibly Cubans) accompanied by an American. The two Latinos informed her the other man's name was Leon Oswald. The visitors wanted her to collaborate in drawing up letters to local businesses to collect funds for

the JURE, headed by Manuel Ray. According to Silvia Odio, the two Latinos gave their names as “Leopoldo” and “Angelo.” After trying to convince her, “Leopoldo” called her the next day to tell her that Oswald was an excellent shot and that he had said “that the Cubans had no guts, because President Kennedy should have been shot after the Bay of Pigs, and that should have been done by the Cubans, because it was him (Kennedy) who was really preventing Cuba’s liberation.”

After the crime, Silvia Odio and her sister Annie identified Oswald as the person who visited them with the two Latinos.

Neither of these men was identified by the FBI, despite Silvia giving detailed descriptions of both of them. In addition, there was no attempt to clarify why Silvia Odio’s visitors referred specifically to the JURE out of so many anti-Castro organizations. The only argument put forward was that her father was in prison in Cuba for belonging to Ray’s group; but they did not clarify that at the time of his arrest he was not a member of the JURE, but of the MRR, another movement founded by Ray in Cuba, from which he had been expelled by his *compañeros* on the advice of the CIA.

After May 1963, Kennedy’s advisors abandoned the CRC, which had been sponsored by the CIA and the Mafia, and established links with Ray and his group, because its social-democratic stance offered a more liberal image than that of the Miami ultraconservatives.

Given the evidence we can assume that the Odio-Oswald contact, unnecessary in relation to effecting the assassination, had a specific purpose and was not a chance meeting. That purpose probably was:

1. To demonstrate to Oswald that there were certain fake anti-Castro groups that served as a screen for Cuban intelligence.
2. To fabricate evidence on a Castro connection in the plot to kill Kennedy.
3. To implicate the JURE and its leader [Ray] in the assassination plot. Accused of being a communist by the CRC and the CIA, those investigating the plot might think Ray was involved, given that Silvia Odio would probably mention in her statement that

men from his group visited her in the company of Oswald, whom she would no doubt identify.

All this leads to the supposition that the Silvia Odio incident is one of the keys to the assassination conspiracy. Knowing who the participants were and, above all, their real motives, could be vital to future investigations.

## The Mexico Episode

From the end of January 1962, Cuba found itself isolated from other Latin American countries, which, with the exception of Mexico, had expelled the island from the OAS under pressure from the US government at the Eighth Consultative Meeting of the Foreign Ministers of the organization in Punta del Este, Uruguay.

The solidarity of the Mexican government and people meant that, among other things, Cuba could count on a neighboring country through which to maintain communication with the outside world. Mexico was a necessary transit point for any Cuban or foreign national attempting to travel to the island. The CIA grasped this very early on and strengthened its station in Mexico City, where it established an extensive technical apparatus monitoring all people leaving or entering Cuba, and Cuban personnel working in Mexico itself. All travelers coming from or going to Cuba were photographed at the airport in an almost overt manner; they were then identified by the CIA, who tried to obtain information on the reasons for their journeys.

An eavesdropping device and photographic register was installed to scan the entrances to Cuban diplomatic missions and obtain intelligence information on conversations that took place inside using telephones and hidden microphones.

Other CIA station activities included anti-Cuba media campaigns, provocations, recruitment attempts, penetrations, obtaining political, military, and economic information, and assigning subversive tasks within Cuban territory, which included attempts on the life of the Cuban president, Fidel Castro.



Lee Harvey Oswald showed up at the Cuban consulate in Mexico City on September 27, 1963. Its staffers at that time were Eusebio Azcué López, who was about to hand over the post of consul general that he had held since June 27, 1961; the new consul, Alfredo Mirabal Díaz, appointed on July 1, 1963; and Silvia Tirado de Durán, a Mexican citizen who was the consular secretary. Eusebio Azcué was 52, Alfredo Mirabal 40, and Silvia Durán 26.

Both the Cuban embassy and consulate in Mexico City were closely watched by the CIA from one of the observation and listening posts at 14901 Francisco Márquez, Colonia Condesa. One of the CIA agents working in the group assigned to this activity was Alberto César Augusto Rodríguez Gallego, a man of Cuban origin who passed himself off as Colombian. The documentary evidence on this CIA control point was supplied to the House Select Committee by the Cuban government in 1978.

Solid evidence of the degree of penetration achieved by the CIA in Mexico City was the discovery of listening devices installed in various parts of the embassy and consulate, such as devices in receptacles or telephone slots and tiny transmitters planted in various locations, activated by remote control. A report on these devices was presented by the Cuban MININT before the tribunal that took place during the 11th World Festival of Youth and Students in Havana in 1978.

In 1963 neither the Cuban embassy nor the consulate had premises protected against electronic espionage, which facilitated the task of the special services. David Phillips, who at that time headed operations against Cuba in the CIA station, subsequently described in his book *The Night Watch* how the surveillance of the Cuban missions in that city functioned:

The head of the Cuban Section was Wally, whom I met for the first time in the University of Chile in Santiago, when he had also been contracted by the CIA as an intelligence officer.

Wally's task was to maintain a total "cover" of the Cuban embassy. Ideally, covering a hostile installation abroad for intelligence purposes includes: spies within informing on their own government, the capacity to read correspondence to and from the embassy, the

capacity to listen in on phone calls, at least one microphone to transmit internal secrets, the capacity to obtain photos of everyone working in the embassy and their visitors, and access to the waste bins... It would be incorrect to state now the total coverage of the Cuban embassy that Wally had achieved when I arrived in Mexico in 1961, but it was quite thorough...

The Cuban consulate in Mexico City was open to the public from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. from Monday to Friday, and work continued until 6:00 p.m. Saturdays were reserved for internal consulate business as and when necessary.

Statements from the Cuban witnesses, Eusebio Azcué and Alfredo Mirabal, and the Mexican secretary Silvia Durán, established that the person identified as Lee Harvey Oswald visited the Cuban consulate on three occasions.

Silvia Durán recalled those visits on September 27, while Eusebio Azcué notes that the first two were made on that date, a Friday, and the third on Saturday the 28th. Alfredo Mirabal stated that he had seen him twice, but was not specific about the date, although it would seem that he was a witness to the second and third visits, which would agree with Silvia Durán's account.

The statements on the chronology of the visits could only be confirmed 15 years after the assassination, as the report summarizing Silvia Durán's statement during her interrogation by the Mexican federal police during her arrest was handed over to the Warren Commission by the CIA station in Mexico City, reduced from a 10-page original, but it did not include — among other omissions and adjustments — the chronology of the encounters with Oswald.

Eusebio Azcué and Silvia Durán attended to Oswald in person during his visits. Alfredo Mirabal saw the subject on two occasions, from a distance of four meters. He had come to replace Azcué as consul, but was not as yet working; moreover, he was not fluent in English.

The statements of Azcué, Mirabal, and Durán allow a reconstruction of what took place during each visit to the Cuban consulate of the subject identified as Oswald, which in summary, were:

1. Oswald asked for a transit visa to Cuba to travel to the Soviet Union and expressed a wish to make the journey on September 30, with a two to three week stay in Cuba.
2. He showed documents and stated that he belonged to the CPUSA and was the secretary of the FPCC in New Orleans.
3. He showed them his passport which confirmed his residence in the Soviet Union from October 1959 to June 1962.
4. He showed his marriage certificate with a Soviet citizen.
5. Silvia Durán prepared the visa application form filled in by Oswald and attached the photos he had handed over, which he had also signed in her presence. Then she added details related to the documents he had presented, as well as other details of the interview. Finally, Alfredo Mirabal signed the notes as a witness.
6. In line with the regulations existing at the time, the Cubans informed the applicant of the impossibility of issuing him a transit visa without already having the visa for the destination country.
7. Azcué, Mirabal, and Silvia Durán all spoke on the phone to the Soviet consulate concerning the matter.
8. The Soviet consulate recognized the personal documents presented by Oswald as authentic. However, it was decided not to grant the visa without prior approval by the government. The process would take about four months and that was communicated to him by Azcué.
9. The subject's disrespectful attitude and insistence on traveling to Cuba led to an argument in which the consul Azcué was obliged to ask him to leave, after which he did not return or telephone again.
10. Oswald's visa application was sent to Cuba for consideration. The response was received a few days later, conditional on the Soviet Union as the country of destination granting a similar visa.

As was to be expected, the subject who identified himself as Oswald utilized the facade fabricated by the CIA in order to try to get to Cuba, including his masquerade as a Castro supporter. This confirms the earlier assessment. Taking into consideration the hours in which the Cuban consulate was open to the public, and assuming — according to Mexican investigations — that Oswald arrived in Mexico City on September 27, 1963, the most probable conclusion is that his three visits took place on that same Friday, a point on which the statements of Silvia Durán and Alfredo Mirabal coincide.

CIA documents declassified in August 1993 and available to the House Select Committee investigators in 1978 in relation to the telephone calls monitored by the Agency's Mexico City station on September 27 and 28, 1963, note that Silvia Durán called the Soviet consulate at 4:05 p.m. on the 27th and spoke of Oswald's visit to the Cuban consulate and the transit visa he had requested. At 4:26 p.m. a Soviet official rang Silvia Durán and informed her of the impossibility of granting the visa without prior consultation with the Soviet authorities in Moscow.

Another call is recorded at 11:51 a.m. on September 28 in which Silvia Durán again spoke with the Soviet consulate and explained that a US citizen had come to the Cuban consulate after being at the Soviet consulate. She then put the visitor on the phone. The conversation was partly in English and partly in Russian. In the latter language, the translator of the call explained that it was very hard to understand the person speaking from the Cuban consulate, and did not offer the content of the conversation in English. According to Silvia Durán's statement to the House Select Committee, that call was never made; it could thus be assumed to be a CIA attempt at disinformation.

A key aspect that has still not been clarified is the possibility that the man who visited the Cuban consulate and identified himself as Oswald was not the same person charged with the assassination of President Kennedy.

Various facts have emerged over the years giving rise to speculation on the existence of a "double." These can be summed up as follows:

1. In spite of the fact that the subject identified as Lee Harvey Oswald visited the Cuban and Soviet consulates on no less than five occasions, meaning he would have been photographed on 10 occasions by the various CIA monitoring devices, to this date the CIA has contributed no photos or footage that could clarify who that person was. Only one photo was provided with the image of a man totally different in appearance from the real Lee Harvey Oswald, and moreover, the identity of that person has not been clearly established.
2. The initial descriptions that the CIA station in Mexico City gave on the supposed Oswald who visited the Cuban and Soviet consulates do not match the personal features of the real subject.
3. The descriptions given by the Cuban witness Eusebio Azcué and the Mexican witness Silvia Durán do not coincide and both differ in their perception of the authenticity of the subject who visited the Cuban consulate. Durán affirmed that it was Lee Harvey Oswald, but Azcué said it was not. For his part, Alfredo Mirabal also confirmed that it was Oswald.
4. The supposed Oswald's poor Russian in his various conversations with the Soviet consulate in relation to his visa, according to the CIA translator. As there are no recordings of those calls, we assume that they are false.
5. The incident described by Silvia Odio that she dates as September 26 or 27 in Dallas, Texas, the date and place when she insists that she saw the Oswald who was subsequently accused of President Kennedy's assassination.

We paid particular attention to this matter of the "double," considering it to be important. Not only are there doubtful elements in relation to the identity of the subject who visited the Cuban consulate, but also others which, on the contrary, authenticate it. These are:

1. Two of the three witnesses of Oswald's visits to the Cuban consulate, the ex-consul Mirabal and Silvia Durán, were con-

clusive in their statements to the House Select Committee in identifying the person who visited the consulate as, without a doubt, the same individual that was later accused of assassinating President Kennedy, even though the personal descriptions they offered 15 years later may not have been exact.

2. According to the reports of the Warren Commission and the House Select Committee, CIA technical personnel and others stated that the signature and photo on the visa application were those of Lee Harvey Oswald.
3. Oswald's visa application form was filled out by Silvia Durán and signed in his presence and that of the new consul Alfredo Mirabal. Under oath Cuban technicians stated that the visa application was drawn up with the Cuban consulate typewriter that was used by Silvia Durán for her work.
4. The visa form was never taken from the consulate, as the witnesses acknowledged.
5. According to the Warren Commission report, after Lee Harvey Oswald's arrest the following were found among his belongings:
  - The documents described by Silvia Durán that Oswald showed her during his visit to the consulate.
  - The note handed to Oswald by Silvia Durán on which he had written her name and the number of the Cuban consulate, so that he could enquire as to the outcome of his visa application.
  - Clothing similar to what he was wearing in the photos handed over to the consulate.
  - A negative from which the photos handed over to the Cuban consulate seemed to have been obtained.

In the undertaking to prove the real identity of the person who visited the Cuban consulate in Mexico City, we came across some information

that suggested a deliberate attempt at manipulating the facts, as well as the introduction of various red herrings.

For example, on October 8, 1963, the CIA station in Mexico sent a cable to its central office, stating:

ACC [Censored] October 1, 1963, an American man who spoke poor Russian, stated that his name was Lee Oswald (phonetically), said that he had been in the Soviet embassy on September 28 and had talked with the consul, who he believed was Vladimirovich Kostikov. He asked the Soviet guard Ivan Obyedkov who answered the call whether there was news on the Washington telegram. After checking, Obyedkov said that nothing had been received as yet, but had been requested.

Ann Goodpasture (a noted CIA officer in Mexico) added a second paragraph to the cable in relation to a photo that she found in one of the fixed points of the Soviet embassy, explaining:

There are photos of a man who looks like an American entering the Soviet embassy at 1216 hours and leaving at 1222 on October 1, 1963. He looks about 35, athletic, close to six feet, with a receding hairline and thinning hair. He was wearing khaki and a sports shirt.

The cable constitutes the first evidence of the CIA station's knowledge of a man called Oswald linked to the Soviet embassy on October 1, 1963, although it does not correspond to the real Oswald's personal description.

Gaeton Fonzi's research contributed information on a meeting between David Phillips and Carl Migdale, office head of the *US News & World Report*, in Mexico City on November 23, 1963, the day after the assassination of the president, where Phillips stated: "Thank God that we reported Oswald being here in September, because if that were not the case, my organization would be in danger of being eliminated..."

It is strange that Phillips made sure that this reporter was one of the first to know of Oswald's visit in September, and this contributes a very important element to the thesis of the subsequent disinformation campaign the CIA station engaged in regarding his presence in Mexico.

Between October 9 and 11, CIA headquarters sent a profile on Lee Henry [sic] Oswald to the CIA station in Mexico, describing him as five feet, 10 inches tall, 165 pounds, thin light brown hair, and blue eyes. Similar cables but with a different description were sent by headquarters to other agencies. In these cables he is described as 35 years old, athletic body, six feet tall, and receding hair; similar to what was sent by the CIA station in Mexico on October 8. It was later explained that this originated because it was forbidden to circulate information obtained via other agencies without the source being clarified.

On November 23, 1963, CIA headquarters asked its station in Mexico City for the transcript of Lee Harvey Oswald's conversations from September 27.

The only record from the CIA station in Mexico City is that of October 1, 1963; however, headquarters directed a review dating back to September 27, which confirms that there was some information suggesting that Oswald could have been in Mexico from that date, coinciding with what David Phillips informed the journalist as early as the day following the assassination of the president.

That same November 23, the CIA station in Mexico responded to headquarters' request for information from October 1, stating that the station could not compare voices because the first tape (September 28) had been erased before the second arrived (October 1). Incomprehensibly, a mere three days were enough for the CIA station to reuse the tape on which the phone conversations of September 28 in the Soviet embassy were recorded.

On November 24, 1963, the CIA station in Mexico City notified headquarters that there were no tape recordings of Oswald.

On November 23, 1963, FBI chief J. Edgar Hoover sent a memo to James Rowley, head of the secret service, notifying him of the CIA report that on October 1 an individual identifying himself as Lee Harvey Oswald had contacted the Soviet embassy in Mexico City, adding: "Special agents from this bureau, who talked with Oswald in Dallas, Texas, have seen photos of the individual referred to above and heard recordings of his voice. The special agents are of the opinion that the aforementioned individual was not L.H. Oswald."



The FBI stated that it had heard tapes that had been destroyed one month previously. So what tapes did the FBI hear then? We suppose that these are the recordings and photos of the false man reported by the CIA on October 8.

It should not be forgotten that David Phillips, as the chief of the Cuba section at the CIA station in Mexico City, was in charge of technical surveillance, and in the final analysis, of everything on this subject dispatched in cables to headquarters.

There is no official evidence prior to November 22 that the CIA station in Mexico had any information on Lee Harvey Oswald's visits to the Cuban consulate in that city, except that related to the transcription of calls made from the consulate on September 27 and 28 concerning the visa, which were finally revealed in 1993. As it was only in those made on September 27 that the persons talking were identified and more than one witness agreed on the content of the conversation, it is probable that at least the September 28 call from the Cuban consulate is a fake.

A September 21, 1978, report from the Information Bureau of the House Select Committee on Assassinations, uncovered a March 24, 1964, memo sent to the Warren Commission in which Richard Helms said that three reports were received on November 22 and 23 of an "unidentified" person in Mexico City, related to the photo of a man who had visited the Cuban and Soviet consulates during the months of October and November 1963, and that the original description of this Oswald in the CIA teletype was: aged 35, athletic build, six feet tall, and receding hair.

Apparently this information relates to the October 8 cable from the CIA station in Mexico City, with the difference that that cable makes no mention at all of the Cuban consulate.

On November 23, without consulting headquarters, Winston Scott, head of the CIA station in Mexico City, took the initiative and sent a note to the Mexican leader, Luis Echevarría, with Silvia Durán's address and her home and work telephone numbers, and asked for her immediate detention. This action provides clear evidence that the CIA station was well aware of her importance as a witness to Oswald's visits to the Cuban consulate, which could have been discovered through the phone

calls registered on those dates, the recordings of which were said to have been erased. This hasty action proves that the CIA was interested in immediately controlling what one of the main witnesses of the visit might know and obtaining confessions that it could manipulate. Further information confirms this.

A person identified as John Scelso in CIA declassified documents, which list him as chief of the Western Hemisphere in the CIA, stated that on being notified, he phoned Winston Scott and asked him to see that Silvia Durán was not arrested. On being informed that the arrest was already inevitable, he called President Luis Echevarría and requested that all information received from Silvia Durán be passed on immediately to his Mexico station, and that the arrest and statements should not be divulged to any left-wing group. According to the documents, this was due to the CIA headquarters' fears that it would be damaging to an unnamed person if it was discovered that the Americans were behind Silvia Durán's arrest.

Two CIA declassified cables address this issue. The first states:

Silvia Durán's arrest is an extremely serious matter that could prejudice US freedom of action on the matter of Cuban responsibility...

The second states:

In relation to Mexican interest, we would ask you to ensure that her arrest is maintained an absolute secret, that no information on it should be published or leaked, that all this information should be sent to us, and that the fact of her arrest or her statements should not be extended to leftist circles or those disloyal to the Mexican government...

On November 28, CIA headquarters sent a clarifying statement to its Mexico City section asking for confirmation that neither Silvia Durán nor the Cubans could have any basis for believing that the Americans were behind her new detention:

We would like to be sure that there is no misunderstanding between us, we want to be assured that Silvia Durán did not receive the

impression that we Americans are behind her arrest. In other words, we want the Mexicans to take full responsibility for the matter.

It was essential that the Cubans and Silvia Durán did not know that the CIA was behind her detention; this is understandable because they hoped to break her as a witness so that her statements on Oswald would implicate Cuba in the assassination. The CIA station appears to have made a great effort to this end.

The chief of the CIA station in Mexico City from 1967 to 1969 testified before the 1978 House Select Committee that he had seen a file on Lee Harvey Oswald that contained one or two transcripts and photos of Oswald. He also stated that Winston Scott had preserved sensitive material that was withdrawn by James Angleton, head of the CIA counterintelligence services, when Scott died.

As it happened, among the material that the House Select Committee reviewed were Scott's notes recording that he had sent — without specifying to whom — everything related to Oswald's Mexico visit, his contact with the Cuban and Soviet consulates, and his visa application to Cuba, which agrees with statements from David Phillips and other sources. Various officers recall having obtained Oswald's photos, something considered a station success, especially that of Ann Goodpasture. It is not clear if this was the same photo that was later rejected as not being of Oswald.

On November 27, the Mexican government sent a 10-page copy of the statement signed by Silvia Durán to the CIA's Mexican station. The station sent it on to headquarters. But the Warren Commission was only presented with a "synthesis" of the text and the House Select Committee concluded that this synthesis did not faithfully represent Silvia Durán's testimony, differing from the original in several respects.

It omitted her description of the individual named Lee Harvey Oswald as "a short blond man, inelegantly dressed." Some 15 years later she told the House Select Committee he was approximately five feet, six inches tall, with thin blond hair, weighing around 125 pounds.

Silvia Durán's testimony was further changed in the synthesis to the Warren Commission insofar as she supposedly said that "exceeding

[her] function, [she] phoned the Soviet consulate in order to help Oswald obtain his visa from that country." But what she really said at the time was that "the only help she could give Oswald was to advise him to see the Soviet consul and call the person in charge of that office."

If the original statement was the truth, then the transcripts of the calls monitored by the CIA station in Mexico on September 27 and 28, 1963, would be cast in doubt.

Would these be the only "alterations" that the CIA made to Silvia Durán's original statement? What was the CIA hoping to achieve by these "alterations" to such crucial testimony?

Other changes were also made to Silvia Durán's testimony in the synthesis of her statement presented to the Warren Commission, wherein it was stated "that she did not recall whether Oswald called after his visit to the consulate," when what she had really said was that "he never called back."

In the Warren Commission synthesis of Silvia Durán's testimony the chronology of Oswald's visits to the Cuban consulate was also omitted; however, CIA declassified documents show that she informed the House Select Committee that Oswald was in the consulate on three occasions on September 27 and not on two, as the Warren Commission was told.

Further, the Warren Commission said that Silvia Durán stated "she did not definitely remember whether the applicant stated that he was a member of the CPUSA." In her statement to the House Select Committee in 1978 she affirmed that "the American showed her his CPUSA membership card," and that she was suspicious about a communist traveling with his card, prompting her to ask Oswald why he didn't get the CPUSA to process his visa to Cuba. He replied that "he had no time for that." The comments on the application form filled out in the Cuban consulate mention that "the applicant showed documents and stated that he was a member of the Communist Party..."

Her declaration in 1978 agrees with what was noted on his visa application and what apparently occurred, given that the application was made at the actual time of Oswald's visit to the consulate; moreover, both Eusebio Azcué and Alfredo Mirabal acknowledged having seen that document.

We should take into account that the Warren Commission was unsuccessful in its attempts to interview Silvia Durán in 1963, and moreover, that all the information it received on Oswald's activities in Mexico came from the CIA.

It was not until June 1978 that Silvia Durán was able to meet in Mexico with representatives from the House Select Committee; in other words, almost 15 years after the event.

Some information was disseminated about Silvia Durán and Eusebio Azcué, the principal witnesses to Oswald's visits to the Cuban consulate, designed to cast doubt on their characters, and thus devalue their testimony. In the case of Durán it was more intense. Alleged outside activities and even intimate ties to Oswald were suggested, as were links with the US, Mexican, or Cuban secret services. The following are some examples:

- On September 18, 1978, in a public hearing, the House Select Committee disclosed a piece of information related to Elena Garro de Paz, a Mexican writer, stating that she had seen Lee Harvey Oswald at a party given in the house of Silvia Durán at the end of September 1963, and that the former Cuban consul Eusebio Azcué was also at the party.
- Both Silvia Durán and Eusebio Azcué roundly denied to the committee the presence of Oswald at activities they might have attended, although they acknowledged that there might have been a party at that time. Azcué recalled that such an activity was given as a farewell to someone who was returning to Cuba on November 18, 1963. It should be borne in mind that the CIA would have had knowledge of the party through its listening devices, and could have decided to spice it up by saying Oswald was present.
- At the same committee hearing, September 18, 1978, Congressman Richardson Preyer asked Eusebio Azcué certain questions based on other information attributed to Elena Garro, who stated that in a conversation between Azcué and Mexican poet Emilio

Carballido, the former had commented that Kennedy had to be killed. This was indignantly denied by Azcué.

The House Select Committee could not confirm Elena Garro's statement about the conversation she had overheard because Elena Garro "refused" to testify and two other people who were also supposedly present "could not be located."

The committee's report concluded Elena Garro's submission was described as "plausible but unsubstantiated," and could not be verified by official US investigative agencies because they could not devote the time, although they were aware of the claim from 1964. Elena Garro had made the allegation on October 5, 1964, 11 days after the Warren Commission report was published. The House Select Committee's report said that Elena Garro's statement would have justified an investigation in October 1964, but it was not undertaken.

The Elena Garro story appears in a CIA declassified document to which the House Select Committee researchers had access in 1978, identifying Charles William Thomas, an official in the US Foreign Service, and an unnamed female US citizen, as the individuals who recounted the alleged story heard from Elena Garro. Charles Thomas was expelled from the US Foreign Service in 1968; after unsuccessfully trying to find employment he committed suicide in 1970. In 1974 the US Senate Foreign Relations Committee decided that his expulsion was an error and posthumously reinstated him.

We found the records on Charles William Thomas, born June 20, 1922. From 1943 to 1946 he was a US marine lieutenant; in 1951 he studied in Paris; in 1952 he entered the State Department and in 1957 he joined the CIA, for which he worked in various countries until his final mission in Mexico City, where he was second secretary in the US embassy. This confirms that the CIA was the original source of the accusation intended to implicate Cuba and discredit important witnesses.

Other information on the supposed intimate relations between Durán and Oswald also appears in declassified CIA documents. These state:

The source stated that he had recently received a call from Silvia Durán. [Censored] confirmed that Silvia had called [Censored].

[Censored] stated that he had visited Silvia to renew their personal relations. During the visit, Durán told [Censored] that she had met Oswald at the Cuban consulate, where he asked for a visa and had appointments with her on various occasions. Durán admitted that she had had intimate relations with Oswald but insisted that she had no idea of his plans. Moreover, Silvia told [Censored] that when the news of the assassination was announced, the Mexican government arrested her, and during the interrogation she was beaten until she admitted to having had relations with Oswald. [Censored] advised [Censored] against any additional contact with Durán because the Cubans or the Mexican police could come to suspect him. There is nothing to indicate in the report of [Censored] as to why his contact with Silvia could make the Cubans suspicious...

The CIA station in Mexico informed headquarters that Silvia had sexual relations with Oswald on various occasions when he was in Mexico.

The Mexican police did not inform the station of the extent of the Durán-Oswald relations...

The document ends by speculating that the Mexican government did not wish to reveal that one of its citizens had had intimate relations with the assassin of President Kennedy.

All these elements came to light 15 years after the House Select Committee investigated the Kennedy assassination. The Warren Commission had earlier decided that "no creditable witness had been found who could affirm having seen Oswald during his stay in Mexico City in company with a person who could not subsequently be identified; on the contrary, he was always seen alone, on buses and in the quoted hotel and restaurant."

Elsewhere the House Select Committee stated it had "received reports from the CIA and the FBI from secret sources, totally corroborating the statements of Silvia Durán..."

The CIA declassified documents also consider Silvia Durán's alleged links to special agencies in her country (Mexico), the United States, or Cuba.

Although the Committee reviewed the files of the US investigative agencies on Silvia Durán and found no evidence of her being a US, Mexican, or Cuban agent, it received some tendentious and contradictory information during its inquiry. For example:

On interviewing David Phillips, chief of the covert action programs and the Cuba section of the CIA station in Mexico City in 1963, he was the only one of the majority of employees of that center interviewed who thought that Durán "might be a source or an agent." Phillips stated that on one occasion [Censored] almost everybody in the Cuban embassy was, and that he had first heard the name Durán from the [Censored] transcripts.

He affirmed that the CIA had no interest in Durán because she was not friendly with anybody. Phillips had previously acknowledged an interest in recruiting her to the CIA station in Mexico City [Censored]... [He reported] that he doubted that Durán had been broken because the station was unable to identify any of her weaknesses.

The members of the House Select Committee talked with Phillips about a report on a file related to Silvia Durán, in which an unidentified individual communicated with her case officer that all that was needed to recruit her was a blond, blue-eyed American in bed with her.

In light of that information, Phillips said "it seemed that the station chief had selected Durán for recruitment and that the weaknesses and means had been identified"; however, "he noted that just because Miss Durán had been selected it did not mean that she had been broken and that he had never heard that Durán had been recruited."

Phillips added that the Durán file in the CIA was "a very thick one because of all the [Censored] that concerned her. He stated that much of the material in her file dated from before the assassination and that he would be very surprised if the Durán file 201 was a thin one and only contained documents prior to the assassination." The House Select Committee asked the CIA for the "P" file on Silvia Durán, but the CIA denied its existence.

Another CIA officer interviewed by the House Select Committee, who had worked in the trials on the Freedom of Information Act in



1975 related to Lee Harvey Oswald, noted that Silvia “could have been a source for anyone — the CIA or Mexican intelligence. There could have been CIA attempts to protect Durán after the assassination, the heavy traffic of cables generated led me to conclude she was a source of information for someone, the Agency or the Mexicans.”

Considering the possibility of Silvia Durán working solely for Cuban intelligence, CIA officer Barney Hidalgo informed the House Select Committee:

I don't know how at that time it was obvious to me that there was a connection there, but this was of no interest to them. I remember that when I saw this contact of mine again I mentioned it and let him proceed to do anything that he might want to do.

Hidalgo stated that he never resolved that matter.

We checked the Cuban archives and found no evidence to indicate that Silvia Durán was linked in any way to Cuban intelligence or to any other Cuban special agency.

The correspondence between the Cuban consulate in Mexico and the Cuban Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Havana in 1963 was reviewed and only one reference could be found related to the issue of links with the special services. In Confidential Report No. 132 of December 2, 1963, the ambassador, Joaquín Hernández Armas, noted: “Before Silvia’s detention, there were comments that her husband Horace was linked to the police forces of his country and outside of it. Yes, he would seem to be linked to the journalist Orlando Barahona who is said to have connections with the FBI.” In this same report, Ambassador Hernández Armas clarifies that he could not vouch for those comments as he had only been aware of them for a short time.

We interviewed various persons linked or known to Silvia Durán in Mexico in 1963. The result of the inquiry was that there was no evidence to indicate that she might have been related to some special service in Mexico or the United States, although a categorical denial is only possible with regard to Cuba. Neither was it possible to confirm the comments made by the Cuban ambassador in his report.

On the basis of the factors considered to date, we were able to arrive at three basic conclusions:

1. The evidence shows that there was a deliberate effort to conceal the truth in relation to the person who visited the Cuban consulate in Mexico using the name of Lee Harvey Oswald, and that in order to achieve that objective, the description of the subject was manipulated, information was concealed, and an attempt was made to discredit the witnesses in order to cast doubt on their testimony.
2. All tendentious and unconfirmed information that obstructs the knowledge of what actually happened and leads to false trails should be discounted.
3. It is essential to confirm whether the person who traveled to Mexico was Lee Harvey Oswald himself, or as some people have claimed, was a double.

We began by determining the identity of the people working at the Cuban embassy in Mexico City in the fall of 1963, as well as those who could have been in transit through that city by coincidence. Files from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and those of the Immigration Service largely facilitated the task.

An extensive inquiry process was carried out, starting with people who could be located and whose offices were in the same building as the Cuban consulate and who, given their proximity, might have been witnesses to Oswald's visits.

The commercial office of the Cuban embassy was on the upper floor of the consulate and shared an access door and waiting room with the latter, located on the ground floor. Among those working in the commercial office we found two new witnesses: Antonio García Lara and Guillermo Ruiz Pérez.

In the interview with Antonio García Lara, he recalled that on one occasion — although he was unable to remember the exact date — he was in his office on the upper floor of the consulate when he heard raised voices, which made him think that something untoward was

happening in the consulate section. He went down to the ground floor and observed an individual and the consul, Eusebio Azcué, just as the dispute in English was ending and the former was leaving. He saw the unknown person from a short distance, close enough to register his facial characteristics.

Some time later, when photos of Lee Harvey Oswald were published in the press, he recognized him as the same person who had been at the embassy in the argument with Azcué. He mentioned this to his family and some work *compañeros*, he couldn't remember exactly whom. He stated that he had not passed on the information as he knew that, shortly afterwards, the Cuban government had handed over to the US government all the evidence on the matter possessed by the consulate, and moreover, nobody had interviewed him officially, given that he was not involved in consular matters but commercial ones.

Guillermo Ruiz Pérez recalled that on an unspecified date at the end of 1963, he was passing through the consulate offices on the ground floor to get to a work meeting in his office in the commercial section. On that occasion, the consul, Eusebio Azcué, was arguing with a young North American and had asked him to act as an interpreter so that his client could understand the issue properly, as Ruiz had a better knowledge of English. He asked him to inform the visitor that they could not grant him a visa for Cuba as he lacked the visa for the country that was his final destination. Ruiz did not remember if Azcué told him the name of the man on that occasion.

Guillermo Ruiz spoke to the person in English and explained what Azcué had said; the latter nodded his head as if he understood and Ruiz left. As he was leaving, the American continued to ask him in English about matters that he could not recall. The answer he gave took only a few seconds, but enough to see him close up.

After the assassination he saw the footage on Mexican television of the transfer from prison of Lee Harvey Oswald and the moment when he was killed by Jack Ruby. He realized at the time, although he confessed to not being very good at physiognomy, that this was the same individual with whom he had talked in the consulate at Azcué's request. Ruiz explained that he mentioned this episode to his wife and

children, in addition to the new consul, Alfredo Mirabal.

In 1978 Guillermo Ruiz was interviewed by members of the House Select Committee who visited Cuba and he did not mention the incident, because he was not questioned on that subject but in relation to information linking him with a Cuban exile in the United States by the name of Antonio Veciana. Nor did the Cuban investigators ask him about it until our interview.

With these two new witnesses — García and Ruiz — there were four statements affirming that the person who visited the Cuban consulate was the same man who was detained and accused of having killed President Kennedy; commonsense dictates the rejection of the idea of a double.

Oswald was a person well known to the Soviet security agencies, which maintained cooperative relations with their Cuban counterparts, an aspect that was also known to the CIA. The appearance of a double to ask for a visa at the Cuban and Soviet consular offices would have implied additional risks in securing the travel of the envoy. There is proof Oswald worked on developing his pro-Castro image and that he was instructed to do so under some pretext or other. That pretext might have been to carry out some mission in Cuba, as he had previously done in the Soviet Union. Furthermore, the use of a double would entail the danger that, if it was discovered after the crime, the existence of a conspiracy would be confirmed. Why then utilize a double to arrange this trip?

All the information prior to the trip to Mexico that suggested the use of a double is linked to actions that would later incriminate Oswald in the assassination, in order to make him a “scapegoat.”

In summary, Lee Harvey Oswald went to Mexico with the intention of traveling to Cuba, using the cover that had been created for him. Due to immigration technicalities that trip was frustrated and this significantly affected the plan to incriminate him. If the trip had occurred, the CIA would have had substantial evidence to back up its charges against Fidel Castro, part of which was attributed to Mexican Elena Garro and Nicaraguan Gilberto Alvarado Ugarte, who turned out to be a Somoza

agent. Neither of those false testimonies could be corroborated by the House Select Committee in 1978.

The frustration of Oswald's attempt to travel to Cuba probably had repercussions for other tasks related to the plan to incriminate Cuba and affected the disinformation spread by the CIA after the assassination of the president about Oswald's trip to Mexico City.

The decision of President Lyndon B. Johnson to dismiss all theories that suggested the existence of a conspiracy, whether it involved Cuba and the Soviet Union or US governmental officials and agents, could also have influenced the heavy disinformation campaign in the aftermath of the assassination.

## Oswald and the Cuban Secret Service

One of the aspects least commented on in the official US investigations are the letters sent to Oswald from Cuba that were received or intercepted in the United States after the assassination. For that reason, we have chosen to focus on this matter.

The only reference in the Warren Commission report to this correspondence is in the context of the allegations of a conspiracy. It states:

A letter was received from someone in Havana, alleging that the sender had attended a meeting where the assassination had been discussed as part of a plan that would soon include the death of other noncommunist leaders in the Americas...

However, all the information subsequently made public concerning these letters from Cuba point to the existence of four others, none of which contained text similar to that mentioned in the Warren Commission report. Furthermore, the House Select Committee completely overlooked this issue.

According to our information, on December 5, 1963, at 12:40 p.m., the following telephone message was received from Inspector Thomas J. Kelly in Dallas:

Yesterday, a letter was found in the correspondence received here by Mrs. Marina Oswald directed to Lee Harvey Oswald at the Dallas, Texas, USA postal center, franked in Havana, Cuba on November 23, which was handed over by the post office. It read as follows:

Havana, November 10, 1963

My friend Lee,

I have written to you many times since we last met in Miami. You took the books in Spanish to the hotel and I hardly have any. I am informing you that there are plans to meet the man here soon and you should close the business as soon as possible, as I advised you beforehand in Miami. I recommend great prudence and that you don't do anything crazy with the money I gave you. I trust you not to cheat me and that our dreams will come true. After the business I will highly recommend you to the chief, who will be very interested and pleased to meet you because they need men like you.

I told him that you could blow out a candle at 50 meters and he does not believe me, but I made him believe me because I saw it with my own eyes. The chief was amazed. Well, Lee, practice your Spanish well for when you come to Havana, the land of freedom, beautiful women, and rich Havana cigars. Don't forget to do everything I told you in the letter and don't leave anything lying around that could leave a trail, etc., and when you receive my letters, destroy them as always. After the business, I will send you your money and we'll see each other here in Miami, at the usual place.

Always yours,  
"Pedro Charles"

Cuba has a photocopy (but not the original) of the report on this letter received by Inspector Kelly in Dallas, describing its content. It is important to note that, considering the postal difficulties at that time, it was virtually impossible that a letter postmarked Havana, November 23, reached the United States 12 days later.

Another letter was received at the editorial office of the *New York Daily* on December 8, 1963, at 6:00 p.m. It is confirmed that the text of that letter was translated for the Warren Commission on December 30, 1963, by Rafaele A. Vaccari. However, the Warren Commission totally omitted this from its report together with any investigation into this piece of evidence. Its content is as follows:

Havana, November 27, 1963

For the editor of the *New York Daily*,  
New York, United States of America

Dear Sir,

It is a pleasure to write you this letter to inform you that the assassination of President John F. Kennedy was paid for by Mr. Pedro, an agent of Fidel Castro in Mexico. This man befriended the ex-marine and sharpshooter Lee Harvey Oswald. They were frequently seen together on various nights. The aforementioned Mr. Pedro Charles had given Oswald \$7,000 as an advance for the preparations. Later, he handed over \$10,000 to complete the job. In other words, the crime was agreed at \$17,000.

Mr. Pedro Charles, who uses other fictitious names and a diplomatic passport to enter and leave Mexico and the United States, is currently at the residence of the Cuban ambassador to Mexico, according to the latest information in my possession.

I would like you to know before anyone else the truth concerning the assassination of President Kennedy in Dallas.

[Signed] Miguel Galván López,

Ex-Captain of the Rebel Army,  
Cuban Exile

There is no original copy of this letter in Cuba either. Judging by the date, and supposing it was mailed on November 27, it did not have time to reach the United States by December 8 unless it was sent by special airmail service.

The term "Cuban Exile" at the end of the letter is also striking, given that it is incomprehensible in the case of a letter supposedly sent from Cuba. The expression "Cuban exiles" refers to persons who emigrated to the United States for various reasons after the revolution of January 1, 1959.

Media reports in 1977 revived the letters episode. The *Miami Herald*



of December 8 and the *US News & World Report* of December 19 reproduced a cable stating that a second letter, also from Havana, was sent to Attorney General Robert Kennedy. Its content affirmed that Oswald had assassinated Kennedy under orders from "Pedro Charles," a Cuban agent who, according to the missive, had traveled to the United States under various aliases; the cable also said Oswald had met with Pedro Charles in Miami some months before and received \$7,000 from him. This letter was signed by "Mario del Rosario Molina." According to the cable, both letters (the one dated November 27 and the other addressed to Oswald, dated November 10, 1963) were posted from Havana the day after the assassination and expert analysts concluded that "both were written on the same typewriter."

The text of the letter supposedly received by Robert Kennedy is similar to that sent to the editor of the *New York Daily*, but was signed by a different person. Everything would seem to indicate that there were five letters (including the one referred to in the Warren Commission report): four that reached their destination in the United States and one that remained in the possession of the Cuban authorities.

This fifth letter was accidentally discovered in the Cuban postal system when a fire broke out on November 23 in the foreign mail sorting office. After the fire, an employee who was checking the mail in order to offer, where possible, apologies to the addressees of destroyed mail, and to forward the rest, found an envelope addressed to Lee Harvey Oswald.

As news of the arrest of the alleged assassin had been circulating since the previous day in the national and international media, the employee immediately informed his chief, who passed it on to the relevant authorities.

Having this single original made it possible for us to submit it to careful scrutiny. The text reads as follows:

Havana,  
November 14, 1963  
Lee Harvey Oswald,  
Miami, Fla.

My friend Lee,

I am writing to ask how things are in Florida, nothing much to say from here. I am informing you that the matter you talked to me about the last time that I was in Mexico would be a perfect plan and would weaken the politics of that braggart Kennedy, although much discretion is needed because you know that there are counterrevolutionaries over there who are working for the CIA. Well, Lee, remember to send me the matter you told me about via Mexico and when you go to Houston to see your relative I wish you all the best, and as far as the other matter goes, I hope it all works out perfectly.

All the best,

Jorge

PS. Write to me at the usual address. Margaret, Flager's blond, is living here with a rebel officer who has set her up in an apartment. I will send you the Spanish books next time.

Patria o Muerte,  
Venceremos.  
¡Viva la Revolución Cubana!  
¡Abajo el Imperialismo!

This letter and the one signed by "Pedro Charles" are similar, which made us think that they were fabricated by one author, despite the different signatures. Subsequently, this supposition was submitted to technical confirmation, the objective being to determine whether one person had written both letters, and also that addressed to Attorney General Robert Kennedy, signed by "Mario del Rosario Molina." It had already been confirmed that the latter had been written with the same typewriter as the one signed by Pedro Charles.

It did not escape our attention that agent Pedro Charles's operational center was allegedly the Cuban embassy in Mexico City, where Oswald had gone in his bid for a visa. It has been established that the CIA station in Mexico City circulated information to try to directly or indirectly incriminate Cuba in the assassination. To that end, it invented and distorted events to sow doubt on witnesses and Oswald's visit to that city, as previously discussed.

The story of Oswald's supposed contact with Cuban agents in the patio of the consulate, during which he received money in payment for the crime to be committed, likewise originated from the CIA's Mexico City station. The source of that false information, as has been stated, was an agent of Somoza's intelligence service, acting under the orders of David Atlee Phillips. The following partial conclusions can be drawn from the letters incident:

1. Apparently, five letters were sent.
2. Apparently, four of them were posted in Havana. Judging by its postmark, the remaining one does not seem to have been sent via that route, while we cannot be precise as to its origin from the data in our possession.
3. Only one original remained in Cuba; information on the others could only be gleaned from official and public US sources.
4. There are four supposed authors, who signed as Jorge, Pedro Charles, Miguel Galván, and Mario del Rosario Molina.
5. It is highly probable that the letters signed by Pedro Charles, Jorge, and Mario del Rosario Molina were written by the same person.
6. Two of the missives that managed to reach their destination left Cuba the day after the crime, on November 23, 1963; those signed by Pedro Charles and Mario del Rosario Molina.
7. Two of the letters, signed by Pedro Charles and Jorge, are dated before the assassination, on November 10 and 14 respectively. A third, signed by Miguel Galván López, is dated November 27, 1963. There is no information on the dates of the other two.

8. Cuba is linked to the assassination in all the letters. In two of them an alleged Cuban agent is clearly implicated in having planned the crime.
9. Two of the letters reached their destination within 11 to 13 days, impossible given the postal congestion of the period, with mail then delayed by a stopover in Mexico. Supposing that they did reach a distribution center in the United States, they could not have done so in such a short time.

Given all these factors, we set ourselves various tasks:

1. To identify the characteristics of the typewriter used to draft the original letter that remained in the possession of the Cuban authorities.
2. To try to determine if persons with the same names as the signatories lived or had lived in Cuba, and to determine if those persons might be their authors.
3. To submit the original letter in our possession to a graphological test for elements that could help to profile the author(s) of the letters.
4. To analyze and evaluate the episode.

The analysis and results of the first and third tasks were inevitably affected by not having the originals (held in the United States), and the fact that we were unable to compare our results with those of the US authorities to determine whether the same typewriter was used. Furthermore, it was not possible to categorically determine how many people were involved in writing the letters. Even with those limitations, the results were as follows:

Report No. 1169-77 of MININT's Central Criminology Laboratory, dated December 14, 1977, concluded that both the details of the addressee on the envelope and the text of the letter contained in the envelope were written by a Remington, Model 16, Pica system of US manufacture.

The expert examination to determine the postmark on the letter is included in the same report. It concluded that it was only possible to decipher, in the area corresponding to the stamp, the letters "N" and "O," probably abbreviations of November.

As the identification details of the typewriter examination performed by US experts on the letters signed by Pedro Charles and Mario del Rosario Molina were not available, we were unable to reach a comparative conclusion in relation to the results of the Cuban investigation of the letter signed by Jorge, as that could only be done with the documents needed for the comparison.

Although logic would lead one to assume that the names of the signatories were fictitious, we took on the task of confirming this. The names utilized that offered the strongest possibility of being identified were those of Miguel Galván López and Mario del Rosario Molina, both having two last names. These were checked in the National Identification Archives, and as one would expect, there were hundreds of people with those names. A number of those persons were immediately eliminated, given that in 1963 they lacked the age or capacity to be the authors of those letters. Even so, we were left with a few dozen people.

Finally, various individuals were selected in different parts of the country as possible suspects. Their lives, and particularly their possession or access to a typewriter similar to the one utilized to draft the letter in the possession of the Cuban authorities, were investigated, and a study was made of their handwriting and signatures, with the objective of determining their writing styles. None of those investigated proved to be a likely author of the letter. Their access to a typewriter similar to the one used was ruled out, and their histories offered no probability of having drafted the letters.

Despite the difficulty in the attempt to locate the senders identified as Jorge and Pedro Charles, given the lack of last names, we tried to obtain evidence of persons with similar names or pseudonyms in our state security files. The few cases of persons investigated or undergoing investigation that appeared with similar names in that period were eliminated on the basis of information that precluded their involvement in writing the letters in 1963. The criminological evidence utilized with that

group to guarantee reliable results was negative. The Cuban intelligence archives also confirmed that in that year, no agent in that service utilized pseudonyms similar to those being sought.

Considering these results we concluded that the names used by the senders of the letters were false.

Only having one example of the letters sent decisively affected the results of our graphological examination. The scant text of the letter and its typewritten content made the task difficult. One useful element was the unique features of the author's style of writing. According to expert report No. 132-78, dated May 9, 1978, from the MININT's Central Criminology Laboratory, the contents of the letters signed by Pedro Charles and Jorge were compared. That comparison confirmed a number of coincidences in different areas: in terms of the greeting, use of expressions and words repeated in both texts, details of places, the theme, the use and misuse of the pronoun variant "*te*," the use and misuse of the relative pronoun "*que*," and the use of the period only within the paragraph.

Although the result of the expert report cannot be conclusive, given that an original was being compared with a translation, that information pointed to the possibility of them being written by the same person.

It should be recalled that the letter signed by Jorge could have been written on the same typewriter utilized for those signed by Pedro Charles and Mario del Rosario Molina. However, this could only have been confirmed by the US authorities.

On analyzing the content of the letters supposedly written prior to the assassination (November 10 and 14) it is evident that their texts include details that could only be known to a person linked to Oswald or involved in the conspiracy to execute the crime. Those details would only come to light some time after official investigations into the crime.

Thus it is superficial to discount the evidence of the letters — as was the case — for the sole reason that they might have been typed on the same typewriter used by apparently different persons. Crucial evidence is concealed in those letters.

If it is the case that the letters constituted “a crude attempt to blame Castro,” it is also undeniable that whoever wrote the missives knew, prior to the assassination, aspects that only became public knowledge during the investigation that followed it. The attempt, albeit crude, was evidently thought up and undertaken by a person who knew about the conspiracy. If it was part of a “deliberate attempt to incriminate Cuba by disaffected persons within the country,” as affirmed in the Warren Commission, it would have been impossible for them to have known the details mentioned in the letters preceding the crime.

These letters signed by Pedro Charles and Jorge respectively, which, as explained, appear to have the same writing style and might have been written on the same typewriter, show the author was aware of several facts before the assassination occurred:

1. Both letters associate the link between Oswald and the sender with scenarios in Dallas, Miami, Houston, and Mexico, all of which are related to the alleged assassin’s movements.
2. It is stated that Oswald was “capable of extinguishing a candle at 50 meters,” which fits with the controversial official line that he was an expert shot.
3. There is an insistence on Oswald learning Spanish, a factor that would subsequently be endorsed in his profile as a motive of his intention to travel to Cuba.
4. There is mention of Cuban counterrevolutionaries working for the CIA. Afterwards, Oswald’s links to such elements would be exposed.
5. It is stated that the plan agreed to with Oswald “would weaken the policies of that braggart Kennedy” — this was the way Kennedy’s opponents often referred to him. The expression could be interpreted as a psychological projection of the sender of the letter.
6. The text of the letter in the hands of the Cuban authorities shows a weak grasp of the Spanish language on the part of its author. It would thus seem to have been written in English and then translated.

On confirming the false identities of the senders and taking into account these other factors, we concluded that the only possibility was that the letters had been written by someone involved in the assassination plot.

There is no evidence that Oswald was in correspondence with or had relations with anyone in Cuba. If that had been the case, other letters with earlier dates would have been seized after his arrest; moreover, all of them reached their destination shortly after the assassination, at the precise moment and with a text designed to incriminate Cuba in the crime.

If Oswald had managed to travel to Cuba, then the fabricated letters might have become concrete evidence. Perhaps that is why they were swiftly cast aside and there has been little focus on them.

The letters are irrefutable evidence of a plan of incrimination prior to the crime. So, it follows, that if there was such a plan, there must also have been a conspiracy in terms of the assassination and that the conspirators hoped to provoke a response against Cuba. The letters written by Miguel Galván López and Mario del Rosario Molina openly name the alleged Cuban agent Pedro Charles as the Cuban connection in the assassination plot. Evidently, both these letters were drafted by the same person, although it is impossible to confirm this. This effort should have been undertaken by other US investigators who had access to those materials.

We therefore concluded the letters were part of an intelligence operation, based on the following elements:

1. The letters of Pedro Charles and Jorge, those that suggest a conspiracy, were written by somebody who knew of the plot, as they were written before the date of the assassination and allude to information only known publicly much later.
2. It is proven that Oswald was not maintaining correspondence, or any other kind of relations, with anyone in Cuba. Furthermore, those letters arrived at their destination at a precise moment and with a conveniently incriminating message, including that sent to his postal address in Dallas, Texas.



3. Some of the letters reached their destination extraordinarily quickly for that period.
4. The letters would have had a greater evidentiary value if Oswald had been able to travel to Cuba, but when that objective was not achieved, they simply appeared as a deliberate attempt to incriminate Cuba. Perhaps that is why they were rejected so promptly.
5. The existence of the letters in 1963 was not publicized or duly investigated and the FBI argued before the Warren Commission to reject them.
6. In one of his statements, Antonio Veciana indicated that his CIA case officer was interested in obtaining false statements pointing to Oswald being a Cuban agent, and that the target selected for such a declaration was an official at the Cuban commercial office in Mexico City. This comment clearly concurs with the content of the incriminatory letters.
7. The fact that Cuban mail had to transit through Mexico City airport, a place where the CIA station was known to have secret collaborators for passenger control to and from Cuba and for various intelligence tasks, facilitated the CIA's access to that mail.
8. The information contributed by Nicaraguan intelligence agent Gilberto Alvarado Ugarte, who subsequently retracted his statement, coincides exactly with the content of the letters detailing the sum to be handed over to Oswald to commit the crime by a Cuban agent in Mexico.

This clearly shows that the letters were fabricated before the assassination occurred and by somebody who was aware of the development of the plot, who could ensure that they arrived at the opportune moment and who had a clandestine base in Cuba from which to undertake the action. Considering the history of the last 40 years, we suppose that only the CIA had such capabilities in Cuba.

## The Incrimination

Immediately after the assassination of President Kennedy, news reports, rumors, and information of all kinds designed to implicate Cuba in the event began to circulate. To that end, it was necessary to consider the role of certain media organizations in this incrimination plan.

We concentrated our investigation on the magazines *Time* and *Fortune*, weekly and monthly magazines respectively, founded by Henry Luce. As the owner of Time Inc., Luce was acknowledged as one of the most representative figures of the so-called free press, closely linked to high-profile political personalities, and a diehard enemy of the Cuban revolution. Our survey also included another weekly, *US News & World Report*, and selectively, the *New York Times*.

Prior to the crime, these print media had demonstrated an inclination to spread disinformation in relation to Cuba. Their principal objective was to encourage anti-Castroism and the struggle against the revolution. This aim became more evident as relations between the two countries deteriorated and the forces within the United States that favored a military solution to the dispute became more cohesive.

Both *Time* and *US News & World Report* made constant editorial appeals for an invasion of Cuba, commencing in the lead up to the Bay of Pigs and continuing to the end of 1962 and the Missile Crisis. However, in April 1963, the media focused on the disagreements between the Cuban exile movement and President Kennedy. On April 12, for example, *Time* criticized the presidential policy of trying to control terrorist attacks on Cuba launched from US territory.

In the face of the president's determination, the affected sectors provoked a public debate, wherein the media was utilized to discredit Kennedy. The issue of Cuba was kept closely linked to domestic issues. As part of this plan, the CIA encouraged the resignation of the main exile leaders who headed the CRC.

Both magazines lost no time in lending their services to the CIA. The editors of *Time* published articles, saying:

JFK could have subscribed to the notion of April being the cruelest month... In April 1961 came his shattering Bay of Pigs debacle. In April 1962 came his savage attack on the steel industry that gave him the label of "anti-business," which he has been trying to lose since then. In April 1963, both issues, steel and Cuba, returned to plague him.

But the Cuban exile group was only a small section within the anti-Kennedy conservative forces that these media organizations tried to influence. A wave of segregationist terror was unleashed in the south that went beyond the incidents at the University of Mississippi in September 1962. Those actions included direct attempts on the lives of some people.

The authorities of various southern states were openly opposed to Kennedy's civil rights policy. On April 7, it was reported that someone had fired from a moving car at the house of George C. Wallace, governor of Alabama and a known segregationist. The legislature offered a \$5,000 reward for information on the guilty parties. On April 12, an explosive device was detonated in the house where Charles C. Diggs, the black representative for Michigan, was sleeping.

All these incidents were reported in *Time* and *US News & World Report*, with commentaries more likely to stoke the crisis than defuse it. Something that caught our attention was that neither of these two publications covered an alleged attack on the life of General Edwin Walker on April 10, which became known some months later when Oswald was accused of this crime. Both magazines had previously closely covered the general's career, such as his retirement from the army in 1961, the dropping of charges against him for instigating race riots in Oxford,

including coverage of the incident itself, and his prominent position in the ultra-right John Birch Society.

It was reported that Walker stated having seen two men prowling around his house two days before the failed attempt. When that occurred he called the police, as published by the Dallas dailies. The editors of both journals seemed to have been unaware of that fact.

On April 23, William C. Moore, a US citizen who had attempted to present a letter to Ross Barrett, governor of Mississippi, appealing for racial moderation, was killed. This incident was reported in the two weeklies. In the midst of so much violence, that could only serve to encourage similar actions or warn others of what could happen to those who, like Moore, stood up to the segregationists.

On May 3, they published false reports on "Cuban terrorist activities" within US territory, at a time when the country was shaken by an atmosphere of violence. With the supposed objective of criticizing the Democrat administration, *Time* covered the exchange of a group of US spies detained in Cuba for a group of others described as four Cuban "terrorists." The magazine noted: "Three of them were caught in a conspiracy to plant bombs in New York. The fourth, Francisco Molina del Río, was charged with second-degree murder and was a pro-Castro gunman. Behind this exchange, as usual, was Robert Kennedy."

In that same issue, in the US book reviews section, there was a detailed summary of a volume titled *A Brief Course on Secret Warfare*. *Time* selected the following excerpts from this book, written by an ex-CIA officer under the pseudonym of Christopher Felix-Dutton:

Each serious US failure, from the U-2 to the Bay of Pigs, has been caused or compelled by those responsible who ignored or left out of their calculations the classic principles of secret operations... There is a tacit agreement among the major powers that political assassination should not be included in secret operations, based on the theory that the death of a head of state cannot resolve the conflict existing between the East and West.

In June, *Time* continued its attacks on the administration. It partially reflected the national debate provoked by Kennedy's renewed policy

to establish and extend civil rights. The issue of the exile movement was largely absent from its pages. Typically, the magazine continued to accuse the Cuban government of subversion and terrorism.

On June 14 it reported the detention in Canada of a commando from the so-called Quebec Liberation Front, which, according to the newspaper, placed bombs in Montreal in the months of February and April. It went on to add that "at least one of its members had direct links to Fidel Castro."

A week later a news item reported: "Attacks in Archbishop Plaza... Two of the perpetrators captured. Who were they? Members of the Communist Party and allies of Fidel Castro..." The incident was once again intended to prove that Castro was determined to "export his revolution."

The same page contained an article on Mexico. To *Time* readers, the words "Mexico," "Attack," and "Castro" must have reinforced the idea that Mexico was the principal center of Cuban terrorism.

*US News & World Report* repeated the news on June 24 in more overt terms: "A Red conspiracy to assassinate Rómulo Betancourt failed when two of its conspirators were captured... The government has ordered the detention of all communists and Castroites."

In Dallas and particularly New Orleans, the local papers increased their coverage of the activities of the anti-Castro groups, placing special emphasis on their disputes with the Kennedy administration over the closure of training camps and the prosecutions of arms smugglers.

Within this atmosphere, news reports began to circulate on Lee Harvey Oswald, including the August 9 street brawl between Oswald and the anti-Castro exiles.

Television cameras were present to record everything that took place, as were the main leaders of the DRE anti-Castro organization in that city: Carlos J. Bringuier, Celso Macario Hernández, and Miguel Cruz, all with acknowledged links to the CIA and the FBI.

That same day, *Time* published an article on the debate over the return of 50 university students who had traveled to Cuba in violation of US federal laws. According to the magazine, the excursion had been partially funded by Castro and organized in San Francisco and New

York by members of the FPCC, an organization supposedly backed by Castro's money...

All this is clear evidence of the psychological preparation prior to the assassination in order to ensure public opinion was ready to accept Cuba's guilt.

September 1963 was an important month in this incrimination plan. On September 9, the New Orleans *Times-Picayune* published an interview with Fidel Castro in Havana, in which it was claimed that the Cuban leader had threatened to kill Kennedy.

According to the *Times-Picayune*, Fidel Castro had stated: "US leaders are in danger if they support any attempt to get rid of Cuban leaders... We are prepared to fight and respond in the same mode. The leaders of the United States should be aware that if they are supporting terrorist plots to eliminate Cuban leaders, they themselves will not be safe..."

Daniel Harker, the AP special correspondent in Havana, was responsible for this article. Why was it sent to and circulated in New Orleans, a few days after Oswald's radio interview, in the same place that events were taking place that could subsequently serve as a basis for theories on Cuban responsibility?

At the same time, the *US News & World Report* gave national coverage to what was going on in New Orleans and also returned to the issue of the students' visit to Cuba, linking it to the argument between Oswald and Bringuier. The magazine commented: "The State Department stated on August 30 that steps were being taken to prosecute 'some but not all' of the 50 US students who defied US policy on traveling to communist Cuba..."

The ground was also being prepared in Dallas. The local papers joined the campaign from September 13, giving free rein to criticisms of President Kennedy and fuelling sentiments of hostility and violence prevailing in the city. For example, on September 17 the *Times Herald* daily asked Dallas citizens to conduct themselves as "cordial hosts," while proceeding to remind them that the city had not voted for Kennedy in 1960 and would surely not do so in 1964.

*Time* and *US News & World Report* maintained their effective cam-

paign of psychological warfare by consistently presenting Cuba as the center for spreading terrorism in the hemisphere, and linking Mexico into this. Every time their editorials referred to alleged Cuban activities, another piece on Mexico would appear on the same page.

On September 20, *Time* offered an article designed to promote one of the basic elements that would subsequently be used in the anti-Cuba campaign: the alleged rejection by Cuba of Kennedy's policy on the island. In its section, "The Hemisphere," excerpts were published from an interview with a university student in Havana who apparently asked the journalist: "Why does Kennedy want to be a friend of Khrushchev and not of Fidel? After all, both nations are socialist..."

Three days later, the *US News & World Report* highlighted the violent tendencies of Fidel Castro sympathizers in the United States, as supposedly displayed by Oswald in New Orleans. The article said: "Violent disturbances were provoked by young pro-Castro elements on September 12 and 13 in the congressional hearing on the illegal journey made by 50 students to Red Cuba... On the first day the police removed 15 demonstrators who were shouting and stamping..."

Seventy-two hours later, on September 26, Oswald left for Mexico in his attempt to travel to Cuba.

Meanwhile, violence was still being fomented in Dallas, as demonstrated by the reception given to Adlai Stevenson. On October 24, a crowd pushed, booed, and even struck the foreign secretary as a warning of how they felt about Democrats visiting their town. Apparently, an enraged woman hit the official on the head with a placard, subsequently heaping a sea of insults on him. A photo published in *Time* captured the moment Stevenson was struck. The caption described the perpetrator as a "super-patriot."

The previous day, in the same theater where Stevenson spoke, General Edwin Walker had addressed close to 1,300 of his ultra-right followers, inciting the protest. In 1961, Walker had been forced to retire from the army for indoctrinating his troops through similar harangues, and inciting and directing the University of Mississippi incidents, for which he had had to face charges. For some reason, the Justice

Department asked for those charges to be withdrawn from this “hero of the right-wing groups” for a bond of \$50,000, according to *Time* magazine. Lee Harvey Oswald had also attended the meeting.

Sergio Carbó, a notorious Cuban exile with close links to US government agencies and the president of the Inter-American Press Society, stated on November 19, 1963: “I estimate that an upcoming and grave event will oblige Washington to modify its policy of peaceful coexistence...” The news was circulated throughout the country and the world by the AP news agency.

Three days later, John Fitzgerald Kennedy, president of the United States, was assassinated in Dallas, and the Dallas newspapers, along with AP, got the scoop. At 1:51 p.m. the patrol cars taking Oswald to the Police Department announced over the radio that they had the suspect. Just 39 minutes later, at 2:30 p.m., the *Dallas Times Herald* was on the street with a description of the alleged assassin, and at 4:15 p.m. they circulated the arrest of Lee Harvey Oswald and the death of police officer Tippit.

The news agencies then focused the blame for the crime on Cuba. UPI issued the following cables:

Dallas, November 22: The police today detained Lee Harvey Oswald, identified as a member of the Fair Play for Cuba Committee and the main suspect in the Kennedy assassination.

Note how the report highlights Oswald’s political affiliation. The dispatches read:

Dallas, November 22: The assassin of President Kennedy is a confessed Marxist who spent three years in Russia trying to renounce his US citizenship, but then changed his mind and obtained a return passage paid for by the government... he was identified as Lee Harvey Oswald, aged 24, an ex-marine and president of the Fair Play for Cuba Committee.

Dallas, November 22: The president died today from gunshot wounds. The police detained a pro-Castro American as the main suspect in the assassination...



Dallas, November 22: The police today detained Lee Harvey Oswald, a Marxist partisan of Prime Minister Fidel Castro.

None of this was new, of course. Much emphasis had been placed on presenting Oswald as a partisan of Fidel Castro and a member of the FPCC. *Time* and *US News & World Report*, as well as AP and UPI, had been proclaiming for a long time that Fidel Castro was disseminating terror in the hemisphere. Now these "terrorist" actions apparently included political assassination.

On November 22, in order to enhance the pro-Castro credentials of the alleged assassin, William Stuckley, who prepared the radio broadcasts for WDSU in August with Carlos Bringuier, retransmitted the recording of Oswald's voice, placing particular emphasis on the parts in which he affirmed his admiration for Fidel Castro and declared himself a Marxist.

The DRE, the organization headed by Carlos Bringuier and linked to the CIA, followed suit immediately, spreading the rumor that Oswald had attempted to penetrate their group on August 5, a few days before he was caught distributing pro-Castro literature. It also stated that at the time of the Missile Crisis the ex-marine had been seen in Miami distributing literature financed by the FPCC and instigating a protest, and that in March 1963 he had returned to infiltrate the exile groups.

The day after the assassination, the news agencies stepped up their anti-Cuba campaign. UPI reported:

Dallas, November 23: Communist sympathizer L.H. Oswald was charged today with the assassination of President Kennedy. The police stated that a test for paraffin on Oswald's hands was positive. Gunpowder residue was also found.

Another dispatch read:

Dallas, November 23: The local police have evidence that President Kennedy was assassinated by pro-communist L.H. Oswald, as was officially announced today. Jesse E. Curry, chief of the Dallas police, stated today that Oswald admitted being a communist... to police officers who interrogated him last night, and that he was a member of the Communist Party.

In the face of all this, which given the moment of national crisis, uncertainty, and chaos, could have sparked an attack against Cuba, President Fidel Castro gave a televised press conference in the evening of November 23, in which he condemned the media campaign underway and its apparent objective: to incite an attack on Cuba.

Fidel's speech was not circulated by the news agencies and did not appear in *Time*, the *US News & World Report* or the New Orleans *Times-Picayune*, all of which simply continued with their anti-Cuba propaganda.

Former CIA agents like Frank Sturgis and John Martino, both implicated in attempts to assassinate the Cuban president on CIA orders, circulated stories linking Oswald with Cuba.

On November 26, the *Sun-Sentinel* of Pompano Beach attributed to Sturgis the news that Oswald had made telephone contact with Cuban intelligence and had connections with the Cuban government through Mexico and New Orleans.

That same day John Martino was interviewed by a Miami radio station and stated that Oswald had distributed literature for the FPCC in Florida. He also made reference to his trip to Mexico in September. Interrogated by the FBI, he stated that his information had come from a Cuban source that he refused to identify. He subsequently affirmed that the source had also said that Oswald had phoned the Cuban intelligence services from a house in Miami, that he had tried to sell marijuana in Houston, and that he had changed Cuban pesos for dollars.

False allegations also circulated through official channels. Thomas Mann, at that time US ambassador to Mexico, sent a cable to Washington arguing that somebody in Mexico or the United States had given Oswald the mission and the money; he said that he did not believe that Soviet intelligence had anything to do with it, but "Castro was the type of person who would launch into that kind of adventure. He is a Latin extremist who acts more from his guts than intellectually and... without fear of the risks... This supposition is reaffirmed by my recollection of the story of the AP reporter in Havana attributing threats against US officials to Fidel Castro..."

*US News & World Report* also entered the fray. On December 2, 1963, it published details of Oswald's past sojourn in the Soviet Union, his communist profile, and his relations with the FPCC, under the title "Lee Harvey Oswald, Castro defender and Marxist, who was charged with the assassination of Kennedy."

On December 9, just one week later, it went into greater detail on the subject:

A deep mystery continues to surround L.H. Oswald: what was the reason for Oswald's visit to Mexico at the end of September, just when it was announced that the president was to visit... Dallas...?

Was Oswald planning the assassination then and preparing his escape route? Did the man charged with the assassination of the president receive money from the Communist Party, with which he maintained correspondence?... Everything now points to the fact that the assassination of President Kennedy was carefully planned... it is also known that Oswald... was an active communist and a belligerent defender of Castro's Cuba...

Castro had warned in a September 7 speech that "the leaders of the United States should realize that if they were supporting plans to eliminate Cuban leaders, they themselves would not be safe..."

The editors of *US News & World Report* continued to call for drastic measures against Cuba, similar to those demanded at the time of the Cuban Missile Crisis in 1962.

To what point is Cuba to be allowed to disseminate and practice violence, virtually at will, in North and South America? ...On November 27, pro-Castro terrorists kidnapped Colonel James K. Chenault, second chief of the US Army military mission in Venezuela. The previous day, Castro terrorists tried to assassinate the principal political leaders of Caracas in an effort to defeat the government... The archives demonstrate that Castro has never stopped creating problems in the United States. Just one year ago, the FBI uncovered a Castro conspiracy to destroy US defense installations and oil refineries in New Jersey and to terrorize crowds in New York stores and theaters.

Note how fake news items published during previous months are cited as evidence to influence public opinion against Cuba. In the midst of the chaos reigning in the United States at the time, it was assumed that the idea of Cuba's participation in the assassination would be rapidly and uncritically accepted by readers of articles such as the following:

It was on November 22 that the violence promoted by Castro was demonstrated in a new and harsh light. L.H. Oswald, charged with the death of Kennedy, had been inspired by Castro. He had distributed pro-Castro literature, and was arrested in New Orleans for his "Viva Cuba" activities. Was Oswald part of a conspiracy, possibly a hired killer directed by Castro's Cubans?

Despite Fidel Castro's denial on Cuban television the day after the assassination, much was made of his alleged September 7 statements. While avoiding directly linking the death of President Kennedy with Castro in any way, US officials said that acting under orders or not, Oswald was influenced by sinister forces, and Castroism was perceived as such a force.

For example, one commentator asked:

What can be done with Castro? ...It is obvious that as long as Castro is in Havana, proffering threats and creating problems, this entire region will be subjected to subversion, terror, and death; all in the name of Fidel Castro... How much longer will Castro be allowed to remain in power to destabilize and practice violence against his neighbors?

The avalanche of false information blaming Cuba for the assassination and the subsequent killing of Oswald by Jack Ruby resulted in a nationwide debate about how to investigate the incident. Lyndon Johnson, the new president, created an investigative committee with full investigative powers.

Those forces promoting the anti-Cuba campaign in the media focused their efforts on disseminating the idea that Oswald and Oswald alone, with no assistance, was guilty. The issue of a Cuban conspiracy was left in the background, as a suspicion impossible to prove or deny.

On December 16, *US News & World Report* suddenly did a 90-degree turn. The national debate provoked by Kennedy's death now focused attention on the committee set up by Johnson, headed by Chief Justice Warren, which had to avoid the campaign to incriminate Cuba, because that campaign had clearly commenced prior to the assassination. Now, the magazine argued:

The facts of President Kennedy's assassination uncovered by the FBI investigation have led the officials to these initial conclusions:

- President Kennedy was assassinated by a lone gunman, Lee Harvey Oswald.
- Oswald had no accomplices at any level. He alone planned the attack and fired the fatal bullets.
- No conspiracy, on the part of groups in the United States or abroad, aided the death of the president or his assassin.

It was "an American tragedy" from beginning to end, the act of one unstable individual among 190 million Americans. (...The investigation did not find Oswald to be a Castro agent or that he was involved in any conspiracy with Cubans to kill Kennedy...)

The Warren Commission's findings echoed, almost literally, these arguments; it was as if the journalists condemning Cuba in *Time* and *US News & World Report* had drafted its final report.

The US media now tried to defuse the domestic anger it had previously provoked, thereby avoiding an investigation that might have exposed the conspiracy.

The propaganda campaign was probably structured in two stages: the first from April 1963, the date on which we established the plot to assassinate Kennedy was initiated, and the second starting from Lyndon Johnson's decision to create the Warren Commission.

In this way the conspiracy to incriminate Cuba in the assassination of President Kennedy was articulated. Lee Harvey Oswald, the alleged lone assassin, was a veteran covert agent recruited by the CIA, probably from his time as a marine in Japan. He was subsequently assigned to an intelligence mission in the Soviet Union, taking advantage of his former relations with Colonel Nikolai Eroshin, who did not belong to the KGB

but to the GRU. This would explain why Oswald was given permission to reside in that country when he planned to defect, seemingly crudely, and the lack of KGB interest in his remaining there from October 1959 until mid-1962.

After his return to the United States, Oswald continued working for the US secret services, which would explain his access to positions in enterprises requiring security clearances or the approval of local security agencies. It would also explain his relations with the Russian community in Dallas.

In New Orleans, Oswald first made contact with the Cuban exile movement and later with elements that possibly informed him that they belonged to Cuban intelligence and were involved in a conspiracy against Kennedy. Hence his activities in the FPCC, his conflicts with the exiles, and later his meeting with the Veciana-Phillips duo and the Silvia Odio affair. As previously explained, Odio was affiliated to the JURE, an organization considered leftist, and who could be linked to the future assassin and give credibility to the theory of a Cuban-sponsored conspiracy.

The visit to the Cuban consulate in Mexico was part of the plot to have Oswald travel to Havana and legitimize his links to Fidel Castro's people. It was one of the fundamental aspects of the incrimination campaign in the media that would be unleashed after the crime.

The letters addressed to Oswald were another "detail" to ensure that there could be no doubt about Cuba's responsibility, and, finally, the campaign in the mass media in the wake of the assassination added the final touches to the plan, except that it failed from the outset and the trail left by Lee Harvey Oswald proved to be his death sentence.

## In Search of the Assassins

On two occasions, first in 1964 and then in 1978, at the request of the United States, Cuba investigated the circumstances and persons allegedly related to the assassination of President John F. Kennedy. It also facilitated interviews with Cuban citizens, our diplomatic representatives in Mexico in 1963. President Fidel Castro offered the House Select Committee his interpretation of the events, and explained his views on the causes of and motives for the assassination.

On both occasions, all the interviews and dates supplied were in response to precise requests from each of the US investigative committees; at no time did the Cuban security agencies initiate an investigation into the event in their own right, as we regarded it as a US domestic matter. It was clear, as Fidel Castro had explained, that the whole media campaign in the wake of the crime had one sole objective, that of incriminating Cuba in the assassination and utilizing it as a pretext to attack Cuba militarily, as demanded by the Cuban mafia in Miami.

In the 1990s, in the run up to the 30th anniversary of Kennedy's assassination, we were investigating the aggression against Cuba in 1963 and reviewing long-held suspicions on the role of the Cuban mafia (including in Operation AM/LASH), and as in 1978, when we supervised the information handed over to the House Select Committee, we decided to analyze the facts as a whole by putting all the pieces together. Once again reviewing the voluminous information available, we noticed that one of the integral parts of the Dallas conspiracy was the fabrication of a provocation that would justify an attack on Cuba.

The thorough analysis of Oswald's story undertaken by our *compañero* Arturo Rodríguez, and the study of a large volume of information at that time dispersed in files that had never been processed, yielded results.

In 1994 a Cuban television series, "ZR/RIFLE," was screened, in which I put forward the main arguments that later, in 1995, I expanded on in seminars organized in Rio de Janeiro and Nassau. Naturally, this was not and is not an easy task. The crime was committed in Dallas, Texas, in US territory, it was there that investigations were undertaken, and the documents that surely contain the definitive keys to the "mystery" of the assassination remain classified.

In the course of this study, the theory of the "Cuban connection" comes up again and again, but not in the way originally suggested by the US media at the time of the assassination. It was the exiles and their CIA chiefs, with their aggressive plans against Cuba, who appeared to be the probable perpetrators of the crime.

Some information connected to acts of terrorism carried out during the 1960s from Miami and New Orleans caught our attention. None of it was conclusive or particularly clear, but it referred to elements that, starting from the leads we already had, took on a new significance. We had to immerse ourselves in a sea of documents from the period received from different sources and through distinct means. It should be recalled that, during this period, Cuba depended to a high degree on the solidarity of many Cubans and Americans who, from the United States, alerted us to plots and subversive incursions against our homeland however they could.

In this way, the investigation considered these fresh elements in conjunction with a careful analysis of the information supplied by the Warren Commission, the Church Commission, and the House Select Committee, in addition to elements contributed by other US studies. Checking all those against aspects uncovered by ourselves, we came across a number of possible leads that might bring new evidence to bear in terms of exposing the deliberately created labyrinth.

The first line of our investigation was a 1963 report on an extremist



organization based in New Orleans named Friends of Democratic Cuba, which launched terrorist attacks against Cuba in complicity with elements from the organized gambling syndicate. New Orleans occupied a prominent place in subversive CIA operations and was the base of an operational unit called the Mambi Commandos, whose objective, as was later made public, was to attack and destroy all the productive installations on the Cuban coastline; blocking these attacks became one of the priorities of our counterintelligence.

We then examined a report on a mid-1963 meeting between a subject (later identified by the source as Oswald) and a group of terrorists of Cuban origin, including the Novo Sampol brothers, Orlando Bosch, Tony Cuesta, and Luis Posada, in a CIA safe house on the outskirts of Miami.

Another report, also from mid-1963, described a meeting of various CIA agents and mafiosi in the Bahamas, where they conspired to assassinate Fidel Castro after "solving the obstacles created by the Kennedys' new policy on Cuba." Carlos Prío, John Roselli, Paulino Sierra, Orlando Bosch, Tony Cuesta, Antonio Veciana, and Eladio del Valle were among the participants.

The fourth report was dated 1980, from a source with direct access to Antonio Veciana. The source stated that Veciana had told him that he had been recruited in Havana in the 1960s by CIA officer David Phillips, who was his handler for more than 15 years. After the House Select Committee investigation, Phillips met Veciana in San Juan, Puerto Rico, and threatened to eliminate him if he revealed what he knew of the Kennedy assassination.

Finally, the last report, dated 1970, mentioned that terrorists Eladio del Valle and Herminio Díaz met up in Dallas around November 20, 1963. The source assumed that they were connected to the assassination, given that they were united by a visceral hatred of the Kennedy brothers and had been trained as sharpshooters. Apparently, they also handled large sums of money after the crime.

Our investigation covered some 157 persons of Cuban origin, [see Appendix 3] plus various US citizens linked in some way to those Cubans.

We selected one group for closer examination, to probe the memories of former collaborators and case officers who at some point penetrated CIA activities in Miami, New Orleans, and Dallas. This did not always yield results, although a lack of direct evidence did not exonerate the suspects. Neither did we overlook the possibility of other suspects. In that context, one has to bear in mind the direct relations among the conspirators, the level of planning, and the extent of the links that they all had at the time with the CIA and the Mafia.

The study clearly demonstrated that in 1963, the city of New Orleans had become one of the most important US bases of plots against Cuba and the central stage for the principal counterrevolutionary organizations, the CIA's commando groups, the autonomous organizations, and the organized crime elements involved in the conspiracy. The Friends of Democratic Cuba group, headed by Guy Banister, Clay Shaw, David Ferrie, and others, had a high profile. Given their links to Carlo Marcello, the local Mafia capo, they grew rich through trafficking contraband military equipment destined for the war on Cuba. Other characters, attracted by this lucrative business, linked up with the group, including Orlando Bosch, Luis Posada, Antonio Cuesta, Orlando Piedra, Frank Sturgis, the brothers Guillermo and Ignacio Novo Sampol, Pedro Luis Díaz Lanz, Carlos Bringuier, Paulino Sierra, and Antonio Veciana.

We found references linking a number of these individuals to the crime, and thus concentrated our attention on the following persons:

**1. Eladio del Valle Gutiérrez**, known as "Yito," was brutally killed in 1967 in the wake of the mysterious death of David Ferrie, when the latter was being interrogated by New Orleans District Attorney Jim Garrison for his alleged participation in the Kennedy assassination. We had plenty of information on that subject dating back to 1959. He had been a member of the Congress of the Republic and the police services in Cuba during the Fulgencio Batista dictatorship. From 1958 he was an associate of Santos Trafficante, Jr., with whom he was involved in contraband operations via the port of Batabanó, south of Havana. He emigrated in the early days of the revolution and established himself in Miami with his old friend Rolando Masferrer, with whom he organized

the Anticommunist Cuban Liberation Movement (MCLA), one of the first counterrevolutionary organizations set up by the CIA. At that time Luis Tacornal, an important Cuban intelligence agent, had penetrated the group as its agent in Cuba. Thus we learned of Colonel J.C. King's role as chief of the CIA's anti-Cuba operation, and later, that of Robert Van Horne and David Sánchez Morales, CIA agents located in the US embassy in Havana. That operation, which included the planned assassination of Fidel Castro, collapsed in November 1960 when the Cuban authorities decided to act and arrested the main conspirators, including US CIA agent Geraldine Shamman. The Cuban press published all the details of their activities.

However, we maintained another source in Miami within the MCLA executive, and thus followed Eladio del Valle's trail to New Orleans, where we discovered his supply trips with pilot David Ferrie to armed bands operating in the Escambray mountains in central Cuba. By then, the MCLA had joined with the groups led by Carlos Prío and Tony Varona, who received significant "donations" from Santos Trafficante, Jr., and Carlo Marcello, Mafia capos in Miami and New Orleans respectively.

In June 1962, we learnt the CIA had ordered Eladio del Valle to infiltrate a commando unit of 32 men into Cuba via Caibarién, on the northern coast of what was then Las Villas province, with the mission of assassinating Fidel Castro and organizing a guerrilla front in that region. One of our collaborators met him when he arrived at Cayo Anguila. They spent various days preparing the operation, but his men finally decided to abort it and return to Miami, probably for fear of being captured. On a number of occasions during that period, del Valle expressed his hatred of the Kennedy brothers, whom he blamed for the failures to overthrow the Cuban regime. Our collaborator's report also mentioned another date of interest to us:

On July 19, 1962, I met up with Eladio del Valle in Cayo Anguila for the second time. He was traveling aboard a 70-foot yacht, the *Aleta*, which was completely fitted out with 32 men on board, dressed in khaki and armed with M-3s... One of them told me that they

had a large number of DRE men and Eladio del Valle said that this organization had contributed \$40,000 to the infiltration of many people on to the island.

That report confirmed that the CIA-controlled DRE<sup>1</sup> was in contact with the group run by Eladio del Valle and Rolando Masferrer in 1962. This was the same group whose leaders met in Dallas in October 1963, supposedly in search of arms for another attempted invasion of Cuba, and which was principally responsible for the US press campaigns attempting to implicate Cuba in the assassination.

The failure of the 1962 expedition visibly affected the tough-guy image the group wanted to project.

Del Valle once more found himself in exile and spent the following months working in the arms-trafficking business with the Mafia. We now know that weapons left US military arsenals and were handed over to the Mafia, which distributed them among Cuban exiles, members of the French OAS, and other extreme right-wing groups in various parts of the world.

The last news we had of Yito del Valle was that of his trip to Dallas in November 1963 and our informer's deduction that he was involved in the Kennedy assassination. This was supported by four key factors: his manifest aversion to the president, whom he blamed for the very existence of the Cuban revolution; the fact that he was an expert shot; his post-crime bragging of having eliminated the obstacle to attacking Cuba; and the excessive quantity of money he handled after the assassination.

The group of persons to whom del Valle was linked was a further element of interest. Many of them, directly involved with the anti-Cuba operation, were qualified terrorists, CIA agents, or closely related to the Mafia families that had lost significant economic interests in Havana after the revolution. The most important were: Santos Trafficante, Jr., Rolando Masferrer, David Ferrie, the Novo Sampol brothers, Manuel

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1. At this time Manuel Salvat was the leader of the DRE.

Salvat, J.C. King, David Sánchez Morales, Tony Varona, Luis Posada, Jack Ruby, and Carlos Prío, as well as the DRE, Rescate, and Friends of Democratic Cuba groups. Was this simply a coincidence?

**2. Sandalio Herminio Díaz García** was reported by an informant as being in company with Eladio del Valle in Dallas two days before the assassination. His criminal record was extensive. A typical 1940s-style gangster who worked as a hit man for the Dominican dictator Rafael Leónidas Trujillo, he reached his peak as a hired killer in 1948, when he murdered Rogelio Hernández Vega while the latter was visiting the Cuban consulate in Mexico City. Later, Cuban police arrested him for various bloody deeds. In March 1956, still acting under Trujillo's orders, he attempted to assassinate Fulgencio Batista, who had fallen out with the Dominican dictator. The following year, in the company of Eufemio Fernández, a local mafioso, he took part in another presidential assassination, this time against José Figueres in Costa Rica, but was discovered there and deported to Mexico without having been able to carry out his plans.

In 1959, on the recommendation of Robert Van Horne, a CIA officer and attaché at the US embassy in Havana, he began to work as a bodyguard for Santos Trafficante, Jr., as chief of police at the Mafia-run Riviera Hotel.

The measures against gangsterism and organized gambling after the revolution aligned him with the counterrevolution and he joined the conspiratorial forces with his old *compañero* Eufemio Hernández, also associated with Trafficante in the Triple A<sup>2</sup> group. At the end of 1960, he and Eufemio met in Havana with the mafioso Richard Cain who, on the orders of Trafficante and Sam Giancana, planned to execute Fidel Castro in a typical gangster shoot-out, taking advantage of any movement by the Cuban leader through the streets of the city. The plot failed and Díaz García was detained. Released at the end of 1962, he

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2. Triple A: Authentic Armed Group, a detachment of the gangster groups belonging to the Cuban Revolutionary Party.

emigrated to Mexico, from where he traveled to Florida to start working for Trafficante again.

According to our information, in November 1963, he was in Dallas with Eladio del Valle, anticipating an unspecified "important event."

In 1966, Díaz García met his death during a sustained clash with Cuban militias in an attempt to land on the northern coast of Havana, having arrived in a vessel commanded by Antonio Cuesta, who was captured. Under interrogation, the latter stated that the motive of the infiltration was to assassinate Fidel Castro and that the plot was masterminded by Jorge Mas Canosa and Santos Trafficante, Jr.

Shortly before his release, years later, Antonio Cuesta — probably prompted by gratitude for the medical and humane attention he had received in detention, as he had been blinded and maimed by an explosion aboard the vessel he was captaining at the time of his arrest — affirmed that Herminio Díaz and Eladio del Valle were part of the Kennedy assassination operation. According to Cuesta, they arrived in Dallas on November 20, 1963, and subsequently handled large sums of money. He affirmed that he learned this from Herminio Díaz, who had referred to it on one occasion.

This revelation took us by surprise. Sadly, despite our insistence, we were unable to discover anything more about the event. He probably knew a lot more than he said, but feared for his family or his fate if he returned to Miami. In any event, he offered us nothing more.

It was important because, without a doubt, Antonio Cuesta was deeply involved in the Cuban exile movement, particularly in New Orleans, up until 1966. In addition to its open CIA affiliation, his group was one of those selected for the notorious autonomous operations conducted in 1963. An active member of the JGCE headed by Carlos Prío and Paulino Sierra, he was one of the key links to the New Orleans Mafia, and as such, participated in smuggling arms out of Dallas in that period.

**3. Antonio Lucas Carlos Veciana Blanch** was a public accountant who worked for sugar magnate Julio Lobo in the last years of the 1950s. During the early months of 1959 he realized that the measures adopted

by the revolution would benefit the popular majority and decided to oppose it. He initially joined the counterrevolutionary Second National Front of the Escambray and then Manuel Ray's newly created Revolutionary Movement of the People (MRP), of which he became a military leader. In that period the CIA station in Havana decided to recruit him through its agent David Phillips and train him in terrorist techniques and psychological warfare. Directed by Phillips, at the end of 1960 he rented Apartment 8 of the building located at 29 Misiones Avenue, whose view commanded the northern terrace of the former Presidential Palace, the venue of public rallies where Fidel Castro often addressed crowds.

In July 1961, agent José Pujals Mederos gave him instructions from Phillips to organize a covert project codenamed Liborio (also known as Operation Cuba in Flames) in conjunction with the MRP. This involved a widespread campaign of sabotage and assassinations in order to spark a popular rally at the Presidential Palace, and the plan to then shoot Fidel Castro from the Misiones apartment with a bazooka given to him by the CIA. It is worth noting that, strangely, those selected for the action were not MRP members but individuals from other counterrevolutionary groups like Rescate and the Second National Front of the Escambray. Was this another coincidence? It would seem improbable, as Phillips had told Pujals Mederos to "find the most appropriate men."

The plot failed, due partly to the efficiency of the Cuban security services, which had picked up the trail of the conspirators. When they realized that they were about to be caught, Veciana and the other would-be assassins fled. That was how, at the end of 1961, Veciana left for Miami.

We knew nothing of him in exile until mid-1962, when he founded the Alpha 66 terrorist organization under the directions of his handler, David Phillips. Later, that organization merged with the Second National Front of the Escambray, commanded by his old associate Eloy Gutiérrez, with the objective of launching attacks on Cuba and Soviet maritime vessels. In the midst of the October Missile Crisis, it was that group which broke the US administration's ban on any action during those days by attacking a Cuban port, probably to scupper talks in the

United Nations aimed at ending the conflict.

By 1963, Veciana was on the CIA pay roll. He acknowledged this in 1976 to investigator Gaeton Fonzi,<sup>3</sup> saying that some time previously, he had received a quarter of a million dollars from his case officer in payment for services rendered.

What kind of job would be worth such a sum, bearing in mind that he was already on the payroll and his expenses were already promptly reimbursed by the Agency?

Following this lead, we discovered that in September 1963 Veciana was linked to two events closely related to the Kennedy assassination. The first was the establishment of an Alpha 66 office in Dallas, headed by Manuel Rodríguez Oscarberro, one of his men. Located on Hollandale Street, it would appear to be the same place in which "Oswald or a subject very similar to him" was seen a few days before the crime by the Dallas deputy sheriff, according to his testimony before the Warren Commission. Veciana also told Gaeton Fonzi that a few days before the assassination, he went to Dallas for a meeting with his CIA case officer. On arrival, he found the officer talking with a subject who was not introduced to him, whom he later recognized as "Oswald or somebody very like him," by chance at the exact same time that the Cuban exile Silvia Odio claimed to have received a visit from Oswald with two counterrevolutionary activists in Dallas. What a strange coincidence! What were the motives of that encounter, which according to Veciana was coincidental? Why did Oswald go to Silvia Odio's apartment at this time? These are issues that we shall expand on later and ones that, as already noted, are probably key to the assassination.

Finally, in his revelations to Fonzi, Veciana stated that shortly after the Kennedy assassination his case officer, whom he identified as "Harold Bishop," proposed that he recruit a relative of his in the Cuban embassy in Mexico; Bishop was referring to the Cuban diplomat Guillermo Ruiz, who was related to Veciana's wife. Why was Veciana given this task by the CIA after the assassination, when — given the

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3. Gaeton Fonzi: one of the House Select Committee investigators and the author of *The Last Investigation*.



clear interest of Oswald's handlers in his obtaining a Cuban visa at the Mexican consulate — it would have been more logical to try to utilize that relationship beforehand?

All these facts link Antonio Veciana to the assassination plot. First, everything would seem to indicate that it was David Phillips who used the name "Harold Bishop," the same person who recruited Veciana in Havana in 1960 and who directed him to assassinate Fidel Castro in 1961. Later, when his Alpha 66 organization established an office in Dallas, a witness stated he saw Oswald (or his double) there a few days before the assassination, and the same offices mysteriously disappeared after the crime. Then Veciana met Oswald (or his double) in the course of a meeting with his case officer in Dallas. Later, it turned out that Veciana had a relative in the Cuban embassy in Mexico, whom the CIA directed him to recruit after the crime, so as to attest to Oswald's relations with the Cuban embassy. There are too many coincidences. I believe that this is one of the significant leads that has still not been investigated.

**4. Manolito Rodríguez (Manuel Oscarberro)** was another subject of our investigations, as he was named by various investigators into the assassination. A collaborator of Veciana, Manuel Rodríguez Oscarberro (his real name) participated in the struggle against the Batista dictatorship and was imprisoned for those activities in 1953 and 1956 in Camagüey, where he was a member of a July 26 Movement cell headed by Rogelio Cisneros Díaz.<sup>4</sup> After the revolution, Rodríguez joined Manuel Artime's MRR and in 1960 sought asylum in the Brazilian embassy along with two notorious CIA agents: Ricardo Morales Navarrete<sup>5</sup> and Isidro Borja Simo. In November 1961, a number of our sources in Miami informed

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4. Rogelio Cisneros Díaz: appointed national coordinator of the MRP after Manuel Ray's exile and subsequently an enemy of Ray. He was one of the mysterious visitors in Dallas a few days before the crime, involved in an arms smuggling operation, and "coincidentally" was friendly with Silvia Odio.
  5. Ricardo Morales Navarrete: alias El Mono, based in Venezuela, was one of Luis Posada Carriles' buddies in that country's DISIP secret police.

us that Rodríguez was the head of the gastronomic section of the Revolutionary Christian Democrat Workers Front and later, at the end of 1962, affiliated to Alpha 66.

In September 1963, Rodríguez received permission from the relevant authorities in Dallas to establish an Alpha 66 office, from which he undertook responsibility for training new members and purchasing arms from smugglers during the following months.

According to journalist Dick Russell's investigation, by April 24, 1963, the secret service considered him such a threat to President Kennedy's life that he was placed on a dangerous persons' list. An FBI memo dated November 24, 1963, stated that an informant described him as violently anti-Kennedy.

Russell reported that arms trafficker John Thomas Masen admitted to Frank Ellsworth, an agent with the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms, that Rodríguez was trying to buy arms and heavy equipment around this time.

Years later, while the House Select Committee investigators were scouring Miami for leads on the assassination among the exiles, the Mafia, and the CIA, Rodríguez told a Cuban intelligence informant that "if his involvement in the assassination was uncovered he was a dead man, given that he was an Alpha 66 delegate in Dallas in 1963 and knew too much." Shortly afterwards he emigrated to Puerto Rico and established himself there "to escape attention and save his hide." A number of incriminating facts emerged from Rodríguez's file:

- In September 1963 he organized an Alpha 66 chapter in Dallas, apparently devoted to collecting arms and military equipment for an anti-Cuba crusade.
- Lee Harvey Oswald is noted as being a probable visitor to his Alpha 66 office in Dallas a few days before the crime.
- As the chief of Alpha 66 in Dallas, the FBI classified him as rabidly anti-Kennedy.
- The secret service had information dating back to April 1963 that he was a danger to the life of President Kennedy.

- The Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms possessed information that Rodríguez was acquiring weapons — including heavy equipment — for clearly illicit activities precisely in the months prior to the assassination.
- Rodríguez had links to Carlos Bringuier, the same man who was involved in an incident with Oswald in New Orleans a few months earlier when the latter was allegedly handing out propaganda in favor of Cuba.
- Rodríguez was an active subordinate of Antonio Veciana who was involved in similar activities at this time.

But this character was never touched, in spite of all the factors against him. The Warren Commission and the House Select Committee discounted him and he was never investigated.

**5. Fermín de Goicoechea Sánchez** was another interesting character, who was the military chief of the DRE in Dallas, Texas, in late 1963.

Information provided by John Thomas Masen, the arms smuggler quoted by Dick Russell, reveals that Goicoechea and two Cubans, Joaquín Martínez Pinillos and Manuel Salvat, were involved in a deal with him to obtain arms for a second invasion of Cuba to be undertaken that year. Goicoechea came from a wealthy family in Sancti Spíritus, in central Cuba. From the age of 12 he went to school in the United States, returning to Cuba in 1959 to study architecture at the University of Havana. There he linked up with Manuel Salvat, Pedro Luis Boytel, Manuel Guillot, Manolito Reyes, and Manuel Artime, all confirmed CIA agents, and left Cuba illegally in 1960 at the request of the MRR, which was training its cadres in CIA camps. He was taken prisoner on April 26, 1961, in the Ciénaga de Zapata, near the Bay of Pigs, where he had landed as part of the Assault Brigade 2506. During interrogations he explained the invasion plans with a wealth of detail, particularly in terms of the Gray Teams, special missions groups that the CIA trained to foment internal counterrevolution.

He returned to the United States at the end of 1962, joined the

DRE organization, and went to live in Dallas, where he enrolled at the university.

Goicoechea, Salvat, and Martínez Pinillos testified to the official investigators that they were in Dallas in October 1963 seeking arms. How strange! So many people in search of weapons to “liberate” Cuba, while the assassination of Kennedy was being planned. The DRE had no military force requiring heavy equipment with which to launch an invasion, so who were the weapons for? There were only two military groups organized on that scale at that time: Artime’s brigade in Nicaragua and another led by Ruiz Williams and Gutiérrez Menoyo (Alpha 66) based in the Dominican Republic. Were these weapons for them?

Another noteworthy fact was that during this period the DRE was basically involved in propaganda work; in other words, psychological warfare, although acts of a terrorist nature were not ruled out. Those activities were directed by David Phillips based in Mexico City, the agent who, according to our information, recruited Manuel Salvat in Havana. So why give him the task of buying weapons for that group, if the Alpha 66 guys were in charge of that?

Another seemingly insignificant detail also caught our attention. Goicoechea was studying at the University of Dallas with Sara Odio, the sister of Silvia Odio, the person who, as we stated, received a visit at the end of September 1963 from two Cubans or Latinos accompanied by an American whom she subsequently identified as Oswald. In the transcripts of Silvia Odio’s statement to the Warren Commission we found information that made us reflect on the Odio episode. She said:

Well, I had been receiving visits from small groups of Cubans asking for aid for the JURE. They were going to start a revolutionary newspaper here in Dallas... I told them that I would help in any way I could. Those were my activities before Oswald’s visit. Of course, all the Cubans knew that I was involved in the JURE, which did not have much of a following and I was criticized for that.

I was a supporter of Ray and his movement. Ray had always had the image of being a leftie and that he was Castro without being Castro...

As I said, the doorbell went and Annie, my sister, went to open it. She was wearing a dressing gown and so was not dressed appropriately and came back and said to me: "Silvia, there are three men at the door, one looks like an American and the other two look like Cubans..." I went to the door and one of them said: "You're Sarita Odio." I said no, that was my sister who was studying at the University of Dallas. Then he asked me: "Is she the eldest one?" I answered: "No, I'm the eldest." Then he said: "You're the person we're looking for... We're members of the JURE..." and went on to say that the reason for their visit was to get help in writing letters to local traders to collect funds for the organization. At least three times they mentioned that they had to continue their trip the next day, and judging by the way they looked, they had just arrived from somewhere else.

As we know, after the assassination of Kennedy, Silvia Odio and her sister Annie recognized Lee Harvey Oswald as the American that visited them.

What was the motive for that visit? What need was there to show Oswald? Why involve the JURE, Silvia Odio's organization, in that adventure? The meaning of this episode had yet to be clarified.

Then we recalled that Fermín de Goicoechea was studying with Sara Odio at the same university. According to Silvia Odio's testimony, the men who called that night confused her with Sara, probably because they did not know her. The visitors stated that they were members of Manuel Ray's JURE, an organization that, according to Silvia Odio, was not well regarded by his compatriots in exile, given his leftist tendencies.

We began to think that maybe the DRE leaders in Dallas at that time had other motives, which could well have been to link Oswald with the JURE, an opponent organization within the exile community that they could involve in the assassination.

If that hypothesis was correct, the Odio incident could have various explanations.

If Oswald was a patsy, as he himself stated on his arrest by the Dallas police, those Cubans or Latinos might have helped to disentangle the plot.

On the other hand, if, as we supposed, the goal of the DRE organization was to incriminate Cuba in the Kennedy assassination, we thought we should investigate the relations of Manuel Salvat and his closest collaborators. One of these collaborators was highly significant, given that he was a veteran agent recruited for the CIA by David Phillips, and also an active member of the DRE, who moved between Miami, New Orleans, and Dallas.

**6. Isidro Borja Simo** was this person. Of Mexican origin, he established himself in Cuba in the early 1950s and graduated from the University of Havana as a civil engineer. While there, he was an active member of the Catholic University Association (ACU). Later, he was part of Artime's MRR, but subsequently he joined the DRE.

On September 15, 1960, Borja was captured by the security forces along with Juan Antonio Muller, brother of Alberto Muller, then head of the DRE, at a house on Tarará beach to the east of Havana during a conspiratorial meeting. Weapons and a large cache of explosives were seized, but Borja managed to escape and sought asylum at the Costa Rican embassy, through which he left the country on November 26, 1960.

Throughout 1962 Isidro Borja was a prominent DRE member on the propaganda front. He was in Mexico City on a number of occasions for such tasks, and our intelligence information revealed that he met with David Phillips there at least once. Apparently he participated in meetings of his organization in Miami and New Orleans, and visited Dallas in the middle of that year.

Curiously, the description of Borja is very similar to that of Angelo, one of the Cubans who accompanied Oswald to Silvia Odio's house on the now famous occasion. Short, approximately five feet, eight inches, olive-skinned, straight hair, and Mexican features, but without a Mexican accent owing to the fact he had lived so long in Cuba. His physique is also similar to that of one of the people in a photo taken of Oswald while he was handing out the pro-Castro leaflets in New Orleans that led to the incident with Carlos Bringuier.

In other words, Isidro Borja was also on our list of suspects and another of the leads to be followed up.

**7. Manuel Salvat Roque** was the principal leader of the DRE in 1963, and a student at the University of Havana's Faculty of Law in 1959, where he was also secretary of the student association. An active member of the ACU, he played a significant role in the FEU elections when the ACU attempted to gain control. He was also involved in a major counterrevolutionary conspiracy that culminated in Huber Matos's<sup>6</sup> attempted military coup in Camagüey province and the bombing of Havana by a plane piloted by Pedro Luis Díaz Lanz and Frank Sturgis. The following year he joined Manuel Artime's MRR and shortly afterwards was appointed propaganda secretary of that organization. A founder along with Alberto Muller of the DRE executive, he was one of the organizers of the protest against the visit to Havana of Anastas Mikoyan, the Soviet first deputy minister.

According to intelligence information, Salvat was recruited to the CIA by David Phillips and was a regular visitor at the latter's public relations office in Havana.

He was expelled from the university and finally left the country for the United States on August 8, 1960. There, together with Muller and other DRE leaders, he joined the FRD and in early 1961, under CIA directions, organized a military expedition to Cuba with the aim of setting up a guerrilla force in the Sierra Maestra, Oriente province, as part of a plot to distract the revolutionary forces when the Assault Brigade 2506 landed in April at the Bay of Pigs. Muller's group was captured in a matter of days, having no support among the campesinos. Salvat, who had remained in Miami, began to work for Radio Swan, a powerful CIA broadcasting station located off Honduras, established by David Phillips.

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6. Huber Matos: ex-commander of the Rebel Army and chief of the Camagüey province who, in coordination with other elements directed by the US embassy in Havana, attempted to foment a military coup against the revolution in 1959.

In mid-1961, Salvat organized an infiltration via the coast of Matanzas province which was frustrated by the Cuban border guards.

Under Salvat's direction, the DRE<sup>7</sup> was primarily engaged in propaganda work and organized anti-Cuba campaigns in various Latin American countries — particularly in universities and educational centers — as part of Operation Mongoose. Their principal aim was the expulsion of Cuba from the OAS and the rupture of diplomatic relations between the Latin American countries and Cuba.

Whenever possible, Salvat linked his propaganda activities to terrorist ones, such as in the 1962 operation against the Cuban delegation that participated in the World Festival of Youth and Students in Helsinki, Finland. On that occasion, with his associates Oscar Echeverría and Carlos Bringuier, they prepared plastic explosive devices in Madrid to be placed in locations where the delegates were.

With close relations with Antonio Varona and Carlos Prío, under Salvat's direction the DRE had key members in various parts of the United States by the beginning of 1963. At that time it merged with the JGCE, which proposed to deploy the men that Manuel Artime was training in Central America as part of a new attack against Cuba at the end of 1963.

One DRE cell, headed by Carlos Bringuier, directed the propaganda effort when Lee Harvey Oswald was allegedly caught distributing pro-Cuba pamphlets in New Orleans. A few days later, on August 21, Bringuier took part in a local radio debate with Oswald on the latter's communist affiliations and support for the Cuban revolution, a recording of which would later be used to confirm Oswald's pro-Cuba profile.

According to the House Select Committee investigators, another branch of Salvat's organization in Chicago, headed by Juan Francisco Blanco Fernández, aroused the suspicions of the secret service by stating a few weeks before the homicide of one of its associates, Homero S. Echeverría, during an arms sale operation, "that they would soon have

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7. According to declassified CIA documents, AM/SPELL was the codename of the DRE.



a lot of money, after taking care of Kennedy.”

In October, further information placed Salvat and Joaquín Martínez Pinillos with Fermín de Goicoechea in Dallas, in the company of the arms smuggler John Thomas Masen, from whom they proposed to acquire weapons of all kinds, presumably stolen from the military depot at Fort Hood, for “a second invasion of Cuba to take place at the end of the year.” This is further confirmation that those individuals were looking for arms in Dallas in these months. Could this be another coincidence?

Immediately after the assassination, Salvat and his group engaged in a wide-ranging media campaign charging Cuba with the crime, circulating Oswald’s pro-communist and pro-Castro background, and arguing that the assassination was Cuba’s reprisal for CIA attempts on the life of Fidel Castro.

According to an informant, Salvat left for Managua on December 4, 1963, for an urgent meeting with Manuel Artime and — we assume — with the CIA officers who controlled them: Howard Hunt and James McCord.<sup>8</sup> We have no other details of that meeting.

A few days later, on December 8, AP in Mexico City received a DRE communiqué stating that three of its men, Carlos Roca, Julio García, and Sergio Pérez had died in Cuba while fighting communists as part of an armed group in the Escambray mountains in central Cuba, commanded by one “Tartabull.”

This information struck us as odd. Why communicate news of that nature in Mexico, which was not the DRE’s operational center; why highlight merely those deaths, when men from both sides were dying on an almost daily basis at that time? Why was it only the *Dallas Morning News* that reported this, when apparently it would be of little interest to the people of Dallas, still shocked by the assassination of the president? What was the purpose of this report?

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8. Howard Hunt and James McCord: veterans of the covert war against Cuba and CIA officers caught in the Democratic Party offices in Watergate, which prompted the political scandal leading to Richard Nixon’s resignation.

It is worthwhile noting that David Phillips headed the operational force in Mexico City at the time this communiqué on the death of the three DRE members in Cuba was released.

Investigating this episode further, we noticed that Rigoberto Tartabull Chacón's band had been defeated by the Cuban forces in August — not September — 1963, in the region of Manicaragua in Las Villas province, and all its members were captured alive. Thus we discovered, as confirmed by the relevant files, that no one with the names cited in the communiqué had ever been part of that band.

The whole business failed to ring true. On the other hand, we were aware of other facts that placed Salvat in Dallas, precisely at the time the assassination was being plotted.

**8. Carlos José del Sagrado Corazón Bringuier Expósito** was another DRE leader, and we discovered his likely connections to the entire plot. A brother of Juan, one of the Assault Brigade 2506 prisoners, Carlos Bringuier established himself in New Orleans after having lived in Miami and Los Angeles. In addition to being the top leader of his group, there he was also propaganda secretary of the Revolutionary Council, headed without distinction by José Luis Rabel Núñez, Sergio Arcacha Smith, and Francisco Bartes. These exiles were all closely linked to the anticommunist and ultra-right wing Friends of Democratic Cuba, run by Guy Banister, Clay Shaw, and David Ferrie, who, in addition to "fighting" for the Cuban cause, trafficked arms for various international right-wing groups, including the French OAS.

In 1962, Bringuier accompanied Salvat and Echeverría to Madrid to conduct terrorist operations against the Cuban delegation participating in the World Festival of Youth and Students in Helsinki, and other DRE propaganda actions.

In 1963, he was the proprietor of the Casa Roca store in New Orleans, where Lee Harvey Oswald went on August 5 to "offer" himself as an "expert marine" to the exiles' cause. The public clash between Bringuier and Oswald on the street was only four days later (August 9), and the radio debate was on August 21.

Bringuier's confrontation with Oswald has always intrigued

investigators into the Kennedy assassination, because of Oswald's letter of August 4, 1963, to the president of the FPCC in which he attempts to document his "revolutionary sympathies," mentioning a public altercation with anti-Castro Cubans before the incident actually took place. After the Kennedy assassination, a Dallas citizen informed the police of a meeting of Bringuier's group on October 13, 1963, attended by a man identical to Oswald. Another coincidence!

And there is more. In his book, Dick Russell demonstrates that a French terrorist known as Gilbert Le Cavalier, a member of the OAS, explained to US investigator Bernard Fensterwald that there had always been links between the anti-Castroites and the French ultra-right. A member of his group named Souetre met in Madrid in early 1963 with Howard Hunt, then chief of covert operations in the CIA Domestic Affairs Division, to coordinate activities. Russell said that they contacted a man named Bringuier, a member of the Free Cuba Committee. At that point Souetre was in New Orleans training a group of exiles from Alpha 66 and the November 30 Movement, two organizations belonging to the JGCE handled by the CIA.

The weapons used for that end came from cargo destined for the US naval base in Guantánamo. The exiles' training camp was located in an area known as Manderville, close to New Orleans, and the general headquarters was an office in that city at 544 Camp Street, owned by Guy Banister, and also the location of the Revolutionary Council of which Bringuier was propaganda secretary.

It should be noted that on July 31, 1963, when the FBI raided a camp of exiled Cubans and mafiosi with a large quantity of arms in the vicinity of Lake Pontchartrain, the property of mafioso Mike McLaney, it was Bringuier who helped the Cubans to leave New Orleans after they were arrested and then mysteriously released.

It was also Bringuier who, in 1967, two days before David Ferrie died in mysterious circumstances while being interviewed by District Attorney Jim Garrison on his alleged participation in the assassination of the president, met with FBI chief J. Edgar Hoover and accused Garrison of harassing Ferrie.

Finally, Bringuier published a book titled *Red Friday*, which, by pure coincidence, was funded by the Texan millionaire H.L. Hunt, who was hostile to both Cuba and Kennedy. In his book, Bringuier tried to demonstrate that the president had been the victim of a Castroite conspiracy. One last detail should be mentioned: Bringuier's store in New Orleans — the same one visited by Oswald — was called Casa Roca, the name of his friend who mysteriously "died" in a combat in Cuba.

Carlos Roca, the alleged casualty reported by the DRE in September 1963, turned out to be Carlos Valentín Roca Varela, born in Havana on February 14, 1932, and a personal friend in adolescence of Bringuier's brother Juan. After the revolution, in the wake of a failed attempt to hijack a fumigation aircraft, he sought asylum in a Latin American embassy, falsified his passport, and left the country in 1962. He established himself in New Orleans where, naturally, he joined the organization headed by Bringuier.

One piece of information from District Attorney Garrison's investigation revealed that during his interrogation David Ferrie admitted that on the day of Kennedy's assassination he had traveled to Houston, Texas, to wait for two members of the assassination team. It was established that the two men were to arrive in a single-motor light aircraft piloted by one of the assassins, a Cuban named Carlos, who was not qualified to fly larger aircraft. According to Ferrie, his companion was another Cuban exile. What happened to those individuals? Did they die, and did their corpses disappear, like so many people involved in or related to the assassination?

If Carlos Roca did not lose his life in Cuba, as announced in the DRE communiqué, what really happened? What is the significance of Bringuier's Casa Roca store in New Orleans, where Oswald went to offer his services as an expert marine? Was David Ferrie's statement that after the crime he had to receive two Cuban members of the hit squad — one of them called Carlos — yet another coincidence? It is worth recalling that Carlos Roca was a fumigation pilot.

Could Carlos Roca and his deceased friends have been part of the group that participated in Kennedy's assassination, and thus,

compromising witnesses? What would Salvat, Bringuier, and all their colleagues have to say?

**9. Víctor Hernández Espinosa**, born in Cárdenas, Matanzas province in 1937, joined the opposition to the Batista dictatorship, where he met many of those who would subsequently be his comrades-in-arms in the future exile movement, including Rolando Cubela, Alberto Blanco, José Luis González Gallarreta, Jorge Robreño, Rolando Martínez, José Braulio Alemán, and others who betrayed their country or deserted with him a few months after the revolutionary triumph. In the United States he enlisted as an instructor for the CIA special missions groups that, after training in Panama, were to organize the internal counterrevolution in the run up to the Bay of Pigs. He was not among those infiltrating Cuba with that objective, however, but remained safely in the rearguard while his companions were captured by the Cuban forces.

There are indications that he was involved in the 1963 AM/LASH conspiracy to assassinate Fidel Castro.

In July of that year Hernández went to New Orleans and was one of the nine Cubans arrested by the FBI in the base owned by gangster Mike McLaney close to Lake Pontchartrain. One month earlier, in Collinsville, Illinois, he had participated in the purchase of 2,400 pounds of dynamite and 20 shells, facilitated by the arms dealer Rich Lauchli,<sup>9</sup> which were transported to New Orleans to be used in bombing raids on Havana.

In the Lake Pontchartrain incident he was linked to pilot Alex Rourke, a mercenary from the group of Frank Sturgis and Orlando Bosch. Rourke apparently died while flying a light aircraft over Mexico in September 1963, when Oswald was in Mexico. Rourke may have been murdered, as the exile media said that he was an FBI informant who had denounced the planned operation and the Pontchartrain camp, and was eliminated for that reason.

Another coincidence worth noting: Rourke's aircraft exploded after

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9. Rich Lauchli: mercenary and smuggler, one of those captured at the Lake Pontchartrain camp.

taking off from Mexican territory at the same time that Oswald was making his travel application.

Hernández was associated with Carlos Bringuier in New Orleans, as he was one of the nine Cubans whom the latter helped to return to Miami after their capture at the training camp by the FBI. Curiously, his description (five feet, eight inches, olive-skinned, and 160 pounds) matches that of one of the Cubans who visited Silvia Odio with Oswald.

Another element that caught our attention was the televised statement of Robert McKeown, an arms dealer, who testified that he was visited at home by Oswald and a Cuban whom he knew from Havana named Hernández in September 1963, asking to buy four rifles with telescopic sights and silencers, which he allegedly refused to sell, as he was on conditional bail. An interesting detail. Was this the same Hernández?

Another strange event took place in September. According to the CIA inspector general's report on Operation AM/LASH, Hernández presented himself before INS officials to inform them of Cubela's plot to assassinate Fidel Castro. Anticipating his arrest, was Hernández trying to obtain life insurance that would save him from an a priori death sentence as a witness to the conspiracy to assassinate the US president? This is another hypothesis that remains to be investigated.

In any event, certain facts were clear: Hernández was an active member of the DRE under Salvat; he participated at some point in the Cubela conspiracy; he had links with the Mafia via José Braulio Alemán, Trafficante, and Roselli; he was a veteran CIA agent, trained in commando operations; he was also in New Orleans and was one of those arrested at the Lake Pontchartrain camp; he was linked to a project involving the group of Frank Sturgis and Orlando Bosch, as well as the Mafia and the CIA; and finally, he was related to Carlos Bringuier, the principal actor in the New Orleans masquerade with Oswald to portray him as a "Castro supporter." There are too many coincidences.

New Orleans was certainly one of the planning centers of the Kennedy assassination. Oswald's history began there, as did the documentation of his "communist and pro-Castro affiliations." That moment was probably the start of the countdown for President Kennedy.

**10. Sergio Arcacha Smith** was another Cuban counterrevolutionary who was active in New Orleans at that time, and one of the first that we came across. He was born in Havana in 1922 and studied civil engineering at Colombia University in New York. Through his connections with the Carlos Prío government, in 1950 he was appointed Cuban consul in Bombay, India, and held that position until he was dismissed in 1953 as the result of a fraud scandal.

After the revolution he left Cuba permanently and joined the US groups headed by Carlos Prío and Antonio Varona; he was designated a FRD delegate in New Orleans where he made contact with the Carlo Marcello Mafia family, who handed over generous sums to the Cuban "cause," in exchange for the promise of compensation when the counter-revolutionaries triumphed and regained the casinos.

Just before the Bay of Pigs landing, Arcacha played an important role in the CIA's planned provocation against the US naval base in Guantánamo, in order to justify a US intervention in the conflict. Sergio Arcacha, David Ferrie, Eladio del Valle, Orlando Piedra, José Luis Rabel, and others acquired the arms for a detachment of 160 men who, under the command of Higinio Díaz Ane, were to attack the US naval base wearing Cuban uniforms, an operation that failed due to the cowardice of its participants but proved profitable nonetheless.

His office was located at 544 Camp Street, next to that of Guy Banister, ex-FBI agent and president of the American Anticommunist League, with whom he founded the Friends of Democratic Cuba organization, a CIA front to collect funds and undertake illicit commercial transactions.

After another fraud scandal, this time within his own organization, he left for Fort Worth, Texas, from where he kept in contact with his New Orleans associates, but was relieved of leadership of the council by José Luis Rabel, a laundry owner with a long counterrevolutionary history. The Warren Commission identified him as the person who had been grassed to the police for having thrown drugged prostitute Rose Cheremie out of a moving vehicle in the vicinity of Dallas on November 20, 1963, a few hours after she had exposed the plot to assassinate

the president. Cheremie died in mysterious circumstances in 1965, apparently knocked down by a car.

According to a report from our intelligence, Arcacha also participated in meetings in Miami and New Orleans convened that spring to discuss the assassination of Fidel Castro and the overthrow of the Cuban government.

In 1963, José Luis Rabel resigned as chief of the council and was replaced by Francisco Bartes Clarens, a friend of Arcacha, who would have a prominent role in the Oswald-Bringuier incident. When the two were released from the police station to which they had been taken as a result of the public scandal, it was Bartes who called the local press and initiated the radio debate that was used to prove Oswald's "communist affiliations." However, the most striking detail was Rabel's link to a training camp for exiled Cubans near New Orleans.

In the course of their investigation into the assassination, Ray and Mary La Fontaine from Dallas wrote and asked us if we knew of Frank Silva, a doctor from the Jackson state hospital who apparently put Oswald up when he visited the city of Clinton, Louisiana, with David Ferrie and Clay Shaw at the end of August 1963. They also asked for details on the Maryland farm close to Jackson, Louisiana, owned by one Lloyd Cobb, who usually employed Cuban exiles. In our investigations, we came across the doctor, named Francisco Antonio Silva Clarens, who was born in 1929 and left Cuba on January 1, 1960. We realized that Frank Bartes Clarens was a cousin of Frank Silva Clarens, the doctor suspected of having put up Oswald in Clinton. Another strange coincidence in this story.

We were only able to find one reference to the farm. In his statement, CIA agent Enrique Fernández Ruíz de la Torre<sup>10</sup> referred to a farm close to Jackson, Louisiana, as a transit point for expeditionaries who were to land in Cuba in April 1961. Was it the same place?

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10. Enrique Fernández Ruíz de la Torre: captured in Cuba in 1963, was the second-in-command of the CIA-organized expedition in April 1961, with the aim of attacking the US Guantánamo naval base disguised as Cuban troops.



**11. David Atlee Phillips** was one of various North Americans we concentrated on, considering their personal involvement in the war against Cuba. Phillips was recruited in Santiago de Chile in 1950 and subsequently incorporated into the PB/SUCCESS operation that overthrew the democratic government of Jacobo Árbenz in Guatemala in 1954. In 1958 he was dispatched to Havana where, using the cover of the David Phillips Associates publicity agency, he engaged in subversive activities under the direction of case officer David Sánchez Morales, at that time a diplomatic attaché at the US embassy.

After the revolution, Phillips's task was to recruit cadres to organize the counterrevolution, including Antonio Veciana and Manuel Salvat. At the end of 1960 he was called to the CIA center in Langley, Virginia, to take charge of the psychological warfare project that was part of the covert war, with Radio Swan as the centerpiece. Before leaving Cuba he organized a plot to assassinate Fidel Castro during a public meeting on the northern terrace of the Presidential Palace.

In 1961 he was designated chief of anti-Cuba operations at the CIA station in Mexico City and organized the plan to incriminate Cuba in the Dallas assassination from there. The following year, still in Mexico, he undertook various covert operations against the revolutionary movement within Cuba. In 1965 he was appointed chief of the CIA station in the Dominican Republic and played an active role in the US military invasion of that country. Two years later he became the chief of the anti-Cuba program at a continental level, and was responsible for the operation to assassinate Ernesto Che Guevara in Bolivia. Finally, he actively participated in the coup d'état that overthrew the popular government of Salvador Allende in Chile in September 1973. That year, his accumulated "merits" earned him the post of chief of the Agency's Western Hemisphere Division, a position that he had to give up two years later, when several of his men were involved in the notorious Watergate scandal.

**12. Howard Hunt** was another CIA officer whose tracks we followed, a veteran officer and writer of spy novels, who, like Phillips, participated in the project to overthrow the Jacobo Árbenz government in Guatemala.

He then went to Uruguay to head the CIA station there. In 1960 he was incorporated into the anti-Cuba project in charge of the “political front,” but was replaced on account of his pro-Batista and ultraconservative tendencies. In 1963 he was chief of covert operations in the recently created Domestic Affairs Division of the CIA, in charge of intelligence within the United States. He was one of those responsible for Operation Freedom, which, within the framework of operations AM/LASH and AM/TRUNK, planned another invasion of Cuba for the end of 1963 using mercenary troops from Central America. Under the Richard Nixon administration and following the president’s instructions, in 1972 he organized a special intelligence apparatus directly subordinated to the White House. He was the mastermind of the break-in at the Democratic Party offices that sparked the Watergate scandal.

**13. David Sánchez Morales**, of Latino origin, also participated in the Guatemala project and was later appointed to the CIA station in Havana, from where he organized a large number of covert operations, initially aimed at neutralizing the political movement and later, to plan the assassination of Fidel Castro in which Frank Sturgis and his colleague Gerry Patrick Hemming would play a large part. In 1962, he was chief of operations at the JM/WAVE CIA base in Miami, from where he directed many operations against Cuba. He was responsible for coordinating those plans with the organized crime syndicates. He was one of the CIA officers who met agent AM/LASH (Cubela) in Paris in September 1963. Suspected of being in Dallas at the time of the assassination, his description matches the person who picked up Lee Harvey Oswald at the exit to the book depository after the fatal shots. For services rendered he attained the CIA equivalent of brigadier general. He operated in Chile and other Latin America countries, and in Vietnam in the Phoenix Program, which infamously led to the death of thousands of people. He was a born assassin and died in mysterious circumstances.

**14. Richard Helms** was the last of our principal CIA suspects. Appointed Agency director in 1966, he was rabidly anti-Cuba and the mastermind of many assassination plots against foreign political leaders. He also

hated Kennedy, and was the direct superior of Phillips, Sánchez Morales, and Hunt.

**15. Santos Trafficante, Jr.**, (of Florida), **Jimmy Hoffa** (of the Teamsters Union), **Carlo Marcello** (of Louisiana), and **Sam Giancana** (of Chicago) were four of the most important US Mafia capos; all had definite roles. There have been many accounts of these characters, and in the face of overwhelming evidence, the House Select Committee itself was unable to discount the possibility that Mafia elements had participated in the assassination.

Over the years, fresh elements and theories that bring us closer to exposing the Dallas crime have come to light. In our assessment, among these are revelations contained in an interesting book, *Double Cross*, the posthumous story of the assassination of Mafia boss Sam Giancana written by his brother Chuck and son Sam. The book narrates the adventures of the capo from his childhood in the style of the film “The Godfather,” and others dedicated to exalting those killers. At one point of the story, Chuck relates how his brother once told him the details of the Kennedy assassination, identifying the principal participants. I imagine that the story has been prettied up, as it should be borne in mind that the book’s probable purpose was to exonerate or humanize the gangster. However, one of the episodes has a certain logic and credibility. To quote the essential paragraphs:

In early spring 1963, when Mooney [Giancana’s nickname] and his CIA partners decided to put into effect the plot to assassinate the president, the scapegoat had to be Oswald.

They had everything in place to make him seem like a communist nut, what with having been in Russia and all that pro-Castro shit... He smelled like a communist... so they thought that it would be no problem to convince the people that he was a communist.

As he had done when he collaborated in the attempts on the life of Castro and in other covert operations, Giancana told Chuck that he had utilized Roselli as his contact with the CIA, but only after an initial meeting with Guy Banister, Robert Maheu, and Charles Cabell, ex-assistant director

of the CIA, then working in Maheu's investigation agency. Another man had also participated in the meeting, whom Giancana described as a "specialist in covert operations," as well as some high-ranking men from the military espionage service in Asia.

After the meeting, Giancana said that Roselli had met "on various occasions" with members of the initial group and also with CIA agent Frank Fiorini [Sturgis]. Roselli continued to act as a link between Giancana, Marcello, Trafficante, and Hoffa, all men anxious to eliminate that nightmare called Jack Kennedy as soon as possible.

Giancana affirmed that the entire conspiracy had the backing of "the highest CIA representatives," noting that some of its past and present top leaders had been implicated, as well as "half a dozen right-wing Texan fanatics," Vice-President Lyndon Johnson, and his counterpart Richard Nixon (under the Eisenhower administration).

The more details revealed by Chuck concerning the conspiracy of Giancana and many others, the clearer it became that there were no lines of demarcation between the mafiosi organization and the CIA. There were no white hats or black hats; everything was a farce "for the use of fools," as Giancana would say. On many occasions the organization and the Mafia were one and the same thing.

That was the case with Frank Fiorini, Giancana's lieutenant, who was simultaneously working for the government's espionage agency and was later implicated in the Watergate scandal under the alias of Frank Sturgis.

The same could be said of Richard Cain, an agent and organization man who had worked as a spy for Giancana in the department of Sheriff Richard Ogilvie. At that point Cain was the man Giancana wanted to make his confidante and companion on international trips, and his CIA link.

From Giancana's point of view — and Chuck could only share those particular deeds that his brother chose to reveal — the CIA and the Mafia were so intertwined that saying there had been a conspiracy between the two would be to ignore the simple fact that, in effect, they were one and the same thing.

Despite its apparent simplicity, Giancana explained that the Dallas shooting had taken several months of preparation in which dozens of men participated, and that the attempt had been prepared for various cities: Miami, Chicago, Los Angeles, and Dallas. However, they finally managed to attract the president to Dallas, the city that offered the best opportunities for an effective assassination attempt. Giancana noted that "both Richard Nixon and Lyndon Johnson knew all about it," as they had met with him on various occasions in Dallas immediately before the assassination. Giancana did not disclose what was discussed with those two men.

According to Giancana, some of Dallas's top police officers were involved in the preparations and — as if that was not enough — so was the mayor, Earl Cabell, brother of Charles Cabell, ex-assistant director of the CIA. "As the man in charge of public security, the mayor facilitated police protection for the presidential convoy. Mooney gave a hint of a smile..."

Chuck found out later through commentaries circulating within the organization that Giancana had solicited professional killers in various places. According to "the boys," precision shooters were required. Two of them, Charles Harrelson and Jack Lawrence, were Marcello's men; another two were Cuban exiles, "friends" of Trafficante. It was rumored that one of the Cubans was a former police agent from the Havana vice squad, who had gone on to become a gangster, and the other, a corrupt US customs officer with radical tendencies.

From Chicago, Giancana contributed Richard Cain, Chuckie Nicolletti, and Milwaukee Phil, all of whom had previously worked on the Bay of Pigs operation. Giancana affirmed that Cain and Nicolletti acted as sharpshooters and were placed at both ends of the Dallas book depository. "And what's more," he insisted, "it was Cain and not Oswald who fired from the fateful window on the sixth floor."

Giancana also explained that the CIA had added a number of its soldiers to the group, utilizing Roscoe White and J.D. Tippit as shooters with Frank Fiorini and Lee Harvey Oswald, the man who, according to Giancana, tried to pass himself off as a lone assassin.

During the operation the CIA high command remained in a hotel surrounded by electronic equipment. With the aid of radio transmitters, the men could be sure of the firing positions and discover Oswald's location immediately after the attempt. One of Giancana's aides, "Milwaukee Phil," stood guard, ready to intervene if the sharpshooters came up against some obstacle at the last minute.

Giancana explained that the CIA had selected White and Tippit, members of the Dallas police force, to eliminate Oswald. With the excuse of self-defense in the line of duty, both of them were to kill the "lone gunman." However, according to Giancana, Tippit vacillated, letting Oswald get away. White was then forced to liquidate his fellow officer. "The rest is history," Giancana added.

The degree of truth in all this is difficult to ascertain; however, by comparing his story to the facts and events related in earlier chapters certain conclusions can be drawn.

This is the extent of the elements and information that emerged in our investigations. We not only kept in mind the particularities of information discovered and public accounts, but also thoroughly analyzed the reports from the official commissions that investigated the assassination in the United States, albeit from a different perspective.

## Epilogue

The year 1963 was filled with anti-Cuba conspiracies; plots on the life of Fidel Castro; the metamorphosis, birth, and independence of the CIA and Mafia's "Cuban American Mechanism," which developed into the now infamous Miami Cuban mafia — and the conspiracy that led to the assassination of US President John F. Kennedy.

The aggression against Cuba was at a peak and the island not only had to confront the strategies of the US administration, which made no attempt to retreat from the campaign of state terrorism that was entering its fourth year, but also the plots of the exile movement, the mafiosi, and the powerful CIA structure that organized covert operations from Florida and the principal countries with which Cuba had relations.

Three conspiracies of exceptional dimensions were executed during that period: AM/LASH, to assassinate Fidel Castro; the assassination of Kennedy; and the incrimination of Cuba for that crime, with the hope of creating a pretext to attack Cuba and overthrow its government.

Millions of taxpayers' dollars were invested in that secret war against Cuba, which is still continuing four decades later, probably with more brutality and premeditation.

Kennedy's assassin has never been revealed and there are many theories as to the identity of those who eliminated him and their motives. In my opinion, the CIA has been party to the publication of material, books, articles, and interviews aimed at misleading various investigators in the United States and elsewhere who have attempted

to uncover that secret, guarded in a box secured by seven padlocks in some corner of its lair.

The intellectual and material authors of the plot are still to be discovered. The former are probably to be found in the very circles of US power that opposed Kennedy's policies; the second within the "Cuban American Mechanism" of the CIA and Mafia, given that those individuals had the motive, the means, and the men trained for such tasks.

When the truth finally emerges some day — despite the box secured with seven padlocks — the US people will be able to make the final judgment and unmask the criminals.

For us, the fundamental objective was to demonstrate — and we believe we have done this — that Cuba was not a coincidental victim of those conspiracies, but the victim of a premeditated plan. Cuba became embroiled in the final stage of the operation to assassinate the US president, precisely because Kennedy was seen as an obstacle to the terrorists' plan for a direct military attack against the island. This is our thesis. For that reason, we assume that the conspiracy against Kennedy, which became an assassination conspiracy, arose precisely as the most dramatic confrontation between the East and West in the entire history of the Cold War was ending. As the October winds of 1962 were dispersed, the "Cuban American Mechanism" of the CIA and Mafia realized that there would be no invasion, surprise attack, or nuclear war against Cuba. Although Kennedy's revised strategy had the same objective, it was considered a betrayal. That was the moment when — as we have shown — the Miami Cuban mafia decided to leave the nest of its progenitor, the US administration. They now felt confident that they had earned sufficient "merit" to be considered a lever of power in Washington in their own right, one that could eliminate anyone, including a president, who dared to oppose them.



## **Part Three**

### **Appendices**



## Appendix 1

### Jack Ruby and his trips to Cuba in 1959

On Sunday, November 24, 1963, when Lee Harvey Oswald was being transferred from the municipal jail to Dallas County prison, he was gunned down before the television cameras by Jacob Rubenstein, better known as Jack Ruby.

Ruby's action prevented the trial of the sole official suspect in the Kennedy assassination. This unleashed criticism and suspicion among the US public, who from that moment began to suspect the existence of a conspiracy.

The circumstances in which Jack Ruby killed Oswald, his inconsistent justification for committing the act, and his background, revealed in government and private investigations into the crime, all lead to the conclusion that he was another scapegoat handled from a redoubt organized by the brains of the conspiracy.

Jack L. Ruby, the descendant of Polish immigrants, was born in Chicago in 1911. His real name was Jacob Rubenstein but he changed it in 1947, considering it too long. In Chicago, Ruby personally knew two killers from a gang operating in that city, David Yaras and Lenny Patrick; both expert shots and closely linked to Sam Giancana, chief of organized crime in Chicago.

From 1937 to 1940 he was employed by Leon Cooke, a financier from the Scrap Iron Handlers Syndicate, to take care of negotiations with the bosses. His job ended when Cooke was gunned down by John Martin, president of the syndicate, who was exonerated on the basis of self-defense. Thanks to his criminal connections, Ruby subsequently

spent time selling confidential information on horse races at the Santa Anita and Bay Meadows tracks in California.

Shortly after completing his military service during World War II, he moved to Dallas, where his sister Eve had just bought a restaurant with money provided by her other brothers. As Ruby declared before the Warren Commission, she converted it into a nightclub and asked him to run it.

However, a former Dallas mayor stated that in July 1946 he had been offered a bribe by criminal elements who wanted to move into Dallas and run illegal activities there. Although the former mayor never knew Ruby personally, those criminals frequently mentioned him and said that he was going to manage a fabulous restaurant as a front for gambling.

It was later confirmed that while the go-between who had been utilized by Mafia elements for their bribery attempt was appealing his sentence, he frequently visited Jack Ruby's Singapore Club, along with other criminals.

In its final report, the House Select Committee stated: "Although Ruby and his family were known to the individuals who participated in the [bribery] incident, including the Chicago gangsters who had taken control of Dallas... there is no firm evidence to demonstrate that Ruby was in fact part of the Chicago group."

Other information confirms that from 1947, Ruby considerably extended his relations with law enforcement agencies in Dallas; he was even escorted by a Dallas Police Department agent when he had to appear before the Senate in Washington as a witness during the hearing of Mafia crimes ordered by Senator Estes Kefauver.

While he was living in Dallas, Ruby was arrested eight times without further consequences. Every time a charge came up against him, it was withdrawn or Ruby was absolved. He was fined on just three occasions: once for disturbing the peace, another time for allowing dancing outside of licensing hours, and a third time for disregarding traffic violation notices. In 14 years, he paid just \$70 in fines, a situation that doubtless had its origin in his close relations with police agents, whom he offered large amounts of strong liquor, free entry to the strip shows, and other

costly entertainments. Such hospitality, the Warren Commission noted, "was not unusual" for a nightclub operator.

Subsequent investigations revealed that Ruby was also a confidant of the local FBI office. Other evidence linked him to Lee Harvey Oswald, his victim, prior to the events of the fall of 1963.

The report of the House Select Committee stated:

The evidence available to the committee indicated that Ruby was not a member of the organized crime syndicate in Dallas or any other place, although it revealed that he had a significant number of associations and direct and indirect contacts with figures from the underworld, some of them related to the most powerful personalities of the Cosa Nostra. Moreover, Ruby had many links with criminal elements in Dallas.

Ruby's friends in the so-called Gambling and Organized Crime Syndicate included Lewis McWillie, linked to Santos Trafficante, Jr., Mafia capo in Florida; Irwin Weiner, a Chicago guarantor; Robert Barney Baker, Jimmy Hoffa's lieutenant; Nofio J. Pecora, the lieutenant of Carlo Marcello, Mafia chief in Louisiana; Harold Tannenbaum, a nightclub owner associated with Pecora; and Murray Dusty Miller, Hoffa's second. Ruby communicated by telephone with all of them one month before the Kennedy assassination. He also contacted Lenny Patrick in the summer of 1963, as concluded by the House Select Committee, in contradiction with statements made by Patrick and Yaras to the FBI in 1964, in which they denied having had any contact with Ruby during the last 10 to 15 years.

One of Ruby's closest friends was McWillie, who left Dallas for Cuba in 1958 and worked in Havana casinos until 1960. In 1959, McWillie became the gambling manager of the Tropicana cabaret casino in Havana. By that time, the Santos Trafficante, Jr., family already represented US Mafia businesses on the island. Ruby had known McWillie since the 1950s, when he managed a nightclub in Dallas.

Having left Cuba in the wake of measures taken by the revolutionary government against gambling interests, McWillie became a fervent opponent of the Cuban revolution, in alliance with the CIA and the most

notorious Cuban counterrevolutionaries exiled in US territory.

Some of the Cuban exiles with whom he had relations were subsequently mentioned in investigations into the assassination of President Kennedy. Santos Trafficante, Jr., had a significant role in the plot drawn up by the CIA to eliminate the Cuban leader Fidel Castro. Together with Carlo Marcello, Trafficante was noted by the House Select Committee as one of the Mafia capos with the strongest motives and opportunities for attempting to kill President Kennedy.

Information linking Ruby with Santos Trafficante, Jr., when the latter was still in Cuba emerged in 1976. The House Select Committee tried to divert attention from that association, commenting: "The importance of the meeting... should not be overrated. The most that it demonstrates is a brief meeting on that occasion. Nobody has thought that President Kennedy's assassination was planned in Cuba in 1959."

Nevertheless, the fact that Jack Ruby was closely linked to Mafia figures with a proven hatred of the Kennedy brothers, who were moreover suspected of having participated in a criminal conspiracy, in conjunction with Ruby's homicide of Oswald, lends importance to this possible meeting in Cuba with Trafficante, particularly for those who have insisted on a "Cuban connection" to the assassination.

Four days after Ruby shot Oswald, the CIA received a cable from the State Department, a fact that was not revealed until 1976. It stated:

On November 26, 1963, a British journalist named John Wilson, also known as Wilson Hudson, gave information to the US embassy in London indicating that "an American gangster type called Ruby" visited Cuba in 1959. Wilson himself was working in Cuba at that time and was imprisoned by Castro prior to being deported.

While in detention in Cuba, Wilson said that he had met an American gangster called Santos who was unable to return to the United States. Instead, he preferred to live in relative luxury in a Cuban jail. Wilson said that while Santos was in prison, he received frequent visits from another American gangster type called Ruby.

According to the House Select Committee, the CIA did not investigate that information and the Warren Commission seems to have been unaware of the cable. The committee was unable to interview Wilson

because, according to reports that it received, he had died, nor could it obtain any independent confirmation of his allegation.

Santos Trafficante, Jr., was detained in Cuba on June 9, 1959, and interned in the Tiscornia camp for undesirable foreigners run by Cuban emigration authorities on June 21. He was released on bail on August 18, 1959, and remained in Cuba until January 1960, when he was expelled.

Through the US INS and tourist visas provided by the Cuban government, the House Select Committee confirmed that Jack Ruby traveled to Cuba on August 8, 1959, left on September 11, returned on September 12, and left again the next day.

From other unspecified reports, the House Select Committee was aware that "Ruby was in Dallas at certain points between August 8 and September 11, 1959, as everything seems to indicate that he checked his safe deposit box on August 21, met with FBI agent Charles W. Flynn on August 31, and asked for access to his safe deposit box again on September 4." Thus the committee concluded that the INS and Cuban government reports were incomplete and that Ruby had to have made at least three trips to Cuba — without being able to specify which airline or other means he used — of which there is no documentary evidence.

In order to determine the possibility of the encounter in Cuba between Jack Ruby and Trafficante, the House Select Committee interviewed Lewis McWillie, Santos Trafficante himself, and José Verdecia, the prison officer in charge of Tiscornia in 1959.

McWillie stated that Ruby had visited him just once, and that it was a social visit. He said that during that time he had visited another detainee in Tiscornia. He recalled that he had seen Trafficante there and only asked him how he was getting along. McWillie said during Ruby's visit he remained in his company most of the time and might have gone with him on a visit to Tiscornia, although he doubted it. He did not remember the details of Ruby's visit clearly.

Santos Trafficante, Jr., testified that there was no reason for Ruby to visit him, saying he had "never been in Dallas and never had any relations with him. I don't see why he should have come to visit me." However, he also stated that he recalled an individual whose description

matched the British journalist John Wilson-Hudson and confirmed that he was one of those detained with him at Tiscornia.

For his part, José Verdecia stated that he did not recall the name John Wilson-Hudson, but did remember a British journalist who had worked in Argentina, as Wilson-Hudson had, and affirmed that he was detained at Tiscornia. Verdecia was questioned by members of the House Select Committee in Havana on August 26, 1978. He did not remember Ruby's name, nor did he recognize his photo, or that of McWillie; however, he recalled the Ruby-McWillie visit after the interview with the Committee members, and described them as two US mafiosi who talked with Trafficante.

The Committee report stated that Ruby testified before the Warren Commission that his trip to Cuba was in response to an invitation from McWillie and lasted around one week, at the end of summer or beginning of fall in 1959. The Warren Commission did not ask him about his alleged contact with Santos Trafficante, Jr., in Tiscornia because, according to the Committee's advisor who led the investigation into organized crime, "he was not aware that the CIA had utilized the Mafia to try and assassinate Castro in the 1960-63 period, and was not familiar with the name Santos Trafficante, Jr., in 1964."

In summary, the British journalist John Wilson-Hudson was detained in Tiscornia and is one of the witnesses to have stated categorically that there was contact between Ruby and Trafficante in that prison, a fact that the latter denied, while McWillie's answer was imprecise. Tiscornia's governor, José Verdecia, recalled Trafficante's confinement and a visit from two elegantly dressed gangsters, one of whom closely resembled Jack Ruby.

On Jack Ruby's trips to Cuba, the House Select Committee reached the conclusion that it would appear that Ruby was a courier for illegal gambling interests when he traveled to Miami from Havana for one day and then returned to Cuba for another day before leaving for New Orleans. This conclusion does not mention the other two trips he apparently made between August 8 and September 11. The Committee also considered "it was possible that Ruby had at least met with various organized crime figures in Cuba, possibly including those who had



been detained by the Cuban government.” This was based on the fact that Ruby had testified before the Warren Commission that he had subsequently received a visit from McWillie and the owner of a Havana casino to discuss the gambling business in Cuba.

The Warren Commission emphasized that an exporter named Robert McKeown alleged that Ruby had offered to buy a letter of introduction to Fidel Castro in 1959, in the hope of obtaining the release of three individuals imprisoned in Cuba. However, the House Select Committee discounted McKeown’s version of facts, considering him an unreliable witness.

By chance Robert McKeown was a mechanical engineer living in Cuba and smuggling arms on behalf of Carlos Prío, the former Cuban president, to be utilized against Fulgencio Batista. McKeown established a coffee business in Havana for which Batista demanded a monthly payment of 5,000 pesos, which he refused to pay. His business was then confiscated and McKeown moved to Miami, where he continued working for Carlos Prío. Through his relations with the Cuban ex-president, he met Frank Sturgis, who participated in one of the earliest CIA plans to poison Prime Minister Fidel Castro, and later escaped to the United States.

In the fall of 1975, McKeown told Dan Rather from the CBS television network that in 1963, when he was living in Bay Cliff, between Houston and Dallas, he was visited by Lee Harvey Oswald and another Cuban named Hernández, whom he knew from Cuba, who offered him \$10,000 for four Savage-300 semi-automatic rifles fitted with telescopic sights; McKeown said he had refused to sell the rifles, as he was on bail at that time. In conclusion, McKeown, another link to Jack Ruby, also appears in the plot preceding the assassination of President Kennedy. His story was discounted, but not investigated, and thus cannot be categorically rejected.

US investigators note that on December 21, 1963, in an interview with the FBI, Ruby acknowledged having phoned an arms smuggler in the Houston area who had been imprisoned in 1958 for bringing arms into Cuba, although he did not mention any interest in freeing underworld characters imprisoned on the island. This statement at least

corroborates his possible link with McKeown.

We concur with the House Select Committee assessment that the possible link between Jack Ruby and Santos Trafficante, Jr., while the latter was detained in Cuba in 1959 cannot be interpreted as part of the plot to assassinate Kennedy; it would, however, demonstrate his connection with the Mafia capo most interested in overturning the revolutionary process.

A summary of the elements indicating the Ruby-Trafficante connection is as follows:

1. Ruby's close link with McWillie, given that both of them had businesses in Dallas long before the latter moved to Cuba and became involved in the gambling business.
2. The gambling business in Cuba had been run by the Santos Trafficante family since 1954, and McWillie was part of his gang and managed the important Tropicana casino.
3. McWillie's invitation to Ruby and the latter's trips to Cuba coincide with the period in which Santos Trafficante, Jr., and other mafiosi were detained in Cuba, and the time after their release.
4. McWillie testified to the House Select Committee that he made various visits to the Tiscornia detention center during Ruby's stay in Cuba.
5. Ruby visited Miami after his stay in Cuba. There he met twice with Meyer Panitz, a partner in the Miami gambling syndicate. The meeting seems to have been arranged by McWillie, who spoke to Panitz by phone before Ruby arrived. At that time, Trafficante was also Mafia chief in that Florida city. Ruby did not mention those visits to the Warren Commission.
6. Ruby visited Cuba at the time when the gambling business was being eradicated by the revolution. As the top figure of that empire, Trafficante was obliged to take measures to offset the expected economic damage.
7. The way in which Ruby's trips came about, his entries and exits and brief stays in Cuba, dispel any idea that they were simply vacations.

## Appendix 2

### Chronology of the principal US subversive activities against Cuba in 1963

**January:** The CIA reorganized its “Cuba” department. Task Force W was replaced by the Special Affairs Section (SAS), with Desmond FitzGerald appointed as its chief.

**January 2:** The Springboard 63 exercises, involving 40,000 men, 110 vessels, and more than 100 airplanes were announced to commence this week. They included amphibious marine landings on the Puerto Rican island of Vieques, training in ground-to-air and land-to-land artillery, the launching of screen-guided missiles on the little island of Culebra, and maneuvers, tracking, and air control. The exercises continued until March.

**January 7:** Rear Admiral Edward J. O’Donnell, chief of the US Guantánamo base during the October Missile Crisis, stated in Boston that Cuba was now stronger than before the crisis. In an interview published by the *Boston Globe*, O’Donnell said that although it did not possess nuclear warheads, in military terms Cuba was the most powerful country in Latin America, and continued to be a threat.

**January 8:** En route to Washington to participate in the OAS council, Adlai Stevenson stated in the US city of Jacksonville that the United States could undertake action against Cuba under the Rio de Janeiro Treaty at any point. Article 8 of the Inter-American Reciprocal Assistance Treaty, signed at the Rio de Janeiro Inter-American Conference in September 1947, stated:

For the effects of this Treaty, the measures that the consulting body agrees on will include one or more of the following:

- The withdrawal of heads of mission.
- The rupture of diplomatic relations.
- The rupture of consular relations.
- The partial or total interruption of economic relations, or of railroad, maritime, aerial, postal, telegraphic, telephone, and radio-telephone communications, and the use of armed force.

Carlos Lechuga, Cuba's permanent representative to the United Nations, presented a note to Secretary General U Thant in relation to the Caribbean crisis. The document exposed new Kennedy actions against Cuba and noted that the United States was persisting with its aggressive plans against the Cuban revolution. The five points posed by Fidel Castro on October 28, 1962, were reiterated.

A counterrevolutionary band headed by "Macho" Contreras attacked the house of campesino militiaman Ernesto Ramos Palacios in El Corojo, Trinidad, Las Villas province, and killed him. Ramos had been a messenger and guide for the Rebel Army.

**January 9:** The training of mercenaries on US bases in Puerto Rico was confirmed.

Having escaped the vigilance of US troops, counterrevolutionary Jacinto Ortega Torres was captured with another counterrevolutionary leaving the Guantánamo base where he had been interned after seeking exile. Ortega stated that an intelligence officer called Wilson had told him that in order to work on the base he would have to enlist in the mercenary army that was being trained in Puerto Rico.

In the early hours of the morning, counterrevolutionary elements entered Las Dolores farm in San Antonio de las Vegas, Havana province, and opened fire on the home of campesino family González Montanaro, while the occupants were sleeping. A child was killed and campesino Agapito González was seriously wounded. The house was plundered and set on fire in the presence of the family and some neighbors.

**January 10:** An unknown band set fire to the store owned by Santos Escobar in Trinidad, Las Villas province.

**January 11:** A group of counterrevolutionary elements killed campesino militiaman Oliverio Morín Valdivia, who lived in Arenal, Casilda, Las Villas province. The family fought back heroically. The bandits, led by Pedro González Sánchez and José Tápanes, were pursued by members of the FAR after one of the counterrevolutionaries was captured.

A new US plan of economic aggression against Cuba was initiated. The United States would maintain its plan to block Cuban foreign trade, announced Joseph W. Reap, a State Department press officer. Reap stated that his government had warned countries whose vessels touched Cuban ports that they were exposing themselves to the Trading with the Enemy Act. The act had come into force in October 1962. According to Reap, in the next few days the US government would announce fresh measures aimed at increasing restrictions on international trade with Cuba.

The leaders of the failed Bay of Pigs invasion of Cuba left for Washington to meet with CRC president José Miró Cardona and Sterling Contrell, appointed by Kennedy to review a new counterrevolutionary plan against Cuba.

The Assault Brigade 2506 continued as a military unit on leave awaiting fresh orders. According to a communiqué, its members had received orders to remain where they could be located and to maintain an "honorable and dignified conduct."

**January 15:** Various bandits burned the town store in Charco Azul, Aguacate municipality, Trinidad.

**January 16:** A group of more than 16 bandits, led by Nilo Armando Saavedra Gil, alias Mandy Florencia, assaulted and robbed the Sierra Alta store, Fomento municipality, Las Villas province. Militiamen Fermín Israel Alonso Perera and José González Basso were taken captive, brutally tortured, and then murdered.

**January 19:** Campesino Luis Laya Yeras was killed by a group of bandits

captained by Rigoberto Tartabull Chacón in the area of Charco Azul, Aguacate municipality, Trinidad.

**January 20:** Some 25 men from the band of Tomás David Pérez Díaz, alias Tomás San Gil, assaulted the home of campesino Estanislao Martínez González, in La Ceiba, a Trinidad municipality. They took him prisoner along with his wife and six children, set up an ambush, and wounded a militiaman.

**January 22:** An Americas postal meeting was convened with the flagrant exclusion of Cuba. The US Postal Administration called a special meeting for January 5-7 to deal with matters of interest to member countries in relation to the Universal Postal Union Congress scheduled for New Delhi, India, in March.

**January 23:** A former US marine who said that he had taught guerrilla tactics to more than 500 Cuban exiles proposed to reopen a training camp. Steve Wilson and another 12 men announced that they would return to Cayo Sin Nombre to renew the program.

**January 24:** A jeep was fired on by an unidentified band in Pedrero, Fomento municipality. Militiaman Eladio Cartaya Aguiet was killed in that action.

Various members of an armed band murdered brother and sister Yolanda and Fermín Rodríguez Díaz, aged 11 and 13 respectively, in the locality of Bolondrón, Matanzas province, during a nighttime attack on their home in which their mother and two younger children were also injured. The incident occurred at La Candelaria farm in the Galeón neighborhood, when a group of counterrevolutionary elements broke into Gregorio Rodríguez's house and asked for the address of a farm manager.

**January 25:** Leading some 40 bandits, Julio Emilio Carretero attacked the Palo Viejo hamlet in Río de Ay, Trinidad municipality. For the operation they divided into two groups: the first and largest was to attack the militia garrison in order to seize its weapons, and the second would liquidate neighbors in the area who sympathized with the revolution.

The second group killed Eustaquio Calzada Ponce, a militiaman and National Institute of Agrarian Reform (INRA) leader, and Rubén Trujillo, a blacksmith in the area. Calzada was murdered in the presence of his wife and his five children, the eldest being just 12. The group burst into the home of José Ramón Díaz and, when they did not find him, burnt it to the ground in front of three of his children and his wife.

The US Navy announced that 450 refugee Cubans in the Guantánamo naval base would be transferred to the United States.

**January 26:** Pedro Sánchez González's band murdered several people in Jagüey Grande and Agramonte, Matanzas province, including two police officers, one militiaman, and a civilian.

**January 28:** A group of spies and saboteurs, operating in Oriente province and directed by the CIA from the Guantánamo naval base, was detected and captured in its entirety. Arms and explosives were taken from them. Pedro Comeron Pérez, a CIA spy infiltrated from Miami, was captured together with three chiefs from information centers and many collaborators. A joint DSE and FAR operation led to the destruction of other espionage and subversion networks. These actions resulted in many detentions and the seizure of a large volume of arms, money, and explosives.

**January 30:** The US Air Force announced that it was sending more combat aircraft to its base in Homestead, Florida. It was planned to pull out F-104 airplanes from two National Guard units and transfer them to Homestead in April. At the same time, the 319 Combat Squadron from the Bunker Hill air base, Indiana, would be sent to Homestead to handle the F-104s. The objective of these decisions was to fortify Florida's air combat power.

**January 31:** The US Senate heard a repetition of the argument that the Soviet Union was maintaining nuclear missile installations in Cuba.

**End of January:** Operation Mongoose was officially discontinued. A special group headed by McGeorge Bundy was set up within the NSC to revise the policy on Cuba. Although Operation Mongoose had been

abolished, the CIA's Task Force W armed wing continued to exist as the Special Affairs Section.

Covert operations continued, particularly attempts on the life of Fidel Castro and other actions aimed at crippling the Cuban economy.

**January–February:** Robert Kennedy met with Manuel Artime, ex-political delegate of the Assault Brigade 2506 and the top leader of the MRR, and Enrique Ruiz Williams, a former member of the Brigade and a trusted CIA man, to discuss training a force of exiled Cubans to invade Cuba. The plan would be directed at provoking an uprising in Cuba, coordinated with an exile landing at two points, Matanzas and Oriente (near the Guantánamo naval enclave). The officers designated by the CIA for the plan were Howard Hunt and James McCord, both future Watergate “plumbers.”

Three training camps were organized: one in the north of Costa Rica, very close to the San Juan River, the natural border with Nicaragua; another in an area known as Monkey Point, south of the port of Bluefields in Nicaragua, close to Costa Rica; and the third, the starting point for the expedition, was in Montecristi, in the north of the Dominican Republic.

The command cadres for the brigade would undergo training in the US Army units of Fort Jackson and Fort Benning. Everything was to be in place by November–December of that year, the date considered ideal by the CIA's “Cuban American Mechanism” for another invasion of Cuba, which would be supported by a dozen Latin American countries that would immediately recognize the provisional government established in the occupied territories.

**February:** The CIA established a new Domestic Affairs Division under the command of Tracy Barnes. Desmond FitzGerald was designated vice-chief in charge of the SAS. Howard Hunt, David Phillips, James McCord, James Noel, Frank Bender, David Sánchez Morales, and all the Bay of Pigs “warriors” were assigned to that division. The JM/WAVE station and the whole Cuba operation was now directed by Barnes. Cuba now became an issue of US domestic policy.



**February 1:** Secretary of State Dean Rusk reiterated that the United States had not abandoned its plans of aggression against the Cuban people and confirmed that pressure was being exerted on all Western countries to isolate Cuba.

**February 2:** Sterling J. Contrell was designated by President Kennedy to coordinate US government plans against Cuba from within the State Department. His principal efforts were devoted to unifying the conspiratorial activities of more than 450 Cuban counterrevolutionary groups operating in the United States.

**February 4:** Vicente Jiménez Alonso, Renier Sarriá Machado, Arnaldo Mora Milián, and Giraldo Pacheco Guerra, soldiers from a tank unit, died when the jeep in which they were traveling was fired on by Pedro González Sánchez's band. This group, which was operating out of Loma del Puerto, Trinidad municipality, intercepted the Pulpa Cuba bus and left seven workers injured. It also attacked a bus from the FNTA sugar mill, killing worker Alberto Águila Chaviano and injuring another three.

**February 5:** The US government made the blockade measures on Cuba official by announcing that it would not load US-financed merchandise on ships from countries maintaining trade with Cuba. The White House announcement was made despite strong opposition from European shipowners.

Defense Secretary Robert McNamara told a press conference that weekly photographic reconnaissance operations were continuing and that all Soviet boats arriving in Cuba were under observation.

The murder of a representative of the American Refrigeration Products trading company led to the discovery of a Cuban counter-revolutionary training camp in the Mexican state of Chiapas, on the border with Guatemala.

A few days earlier, the body of Mauricio Arias Rezano, aged 36, had been discovered on an unmade road close to the national bridge near Jalapa, capital of the state of Veracruz. Cuban counterrevolutionary Juan Carlos Correa, aged 50, was arrested and confessed to the crime.

He was a former secret police lieutenant during the Fulgencio Batista dictatorship and member of the New York Anti-Castro Front, according to credentials found on him. Correa said he had killed Rezano to prevent him discovering the existence of the camp, where hundreds of Cuban counterrevolutionaries were training.

**February 6:** In the US Congress, Senators Kenneth Keating and Strom Thurmond demanded more aggressive measures against Cuba, and various debates took place in both houses. Democrat leader Hubert Humphrey stated that there should be a public congressional investigation, including an interrogation of CIA chief John McCone. For his part, Republican Representative William Minshall proposed another congressional inquiry in relation to the espionage agencies involved with Cuba. The tone of these statements challenged Kennedy's policy on Cuba.

**February 7:** It was decided that René Schick, the president-elect of Nicaragua, would attend, in an observer capacity, the conference President Kennedy had called for March 18–20 with Luis Somoza and the leaders of four other Central American republics. The central issues of the meeting included the aggression against Cuba. In that context, Somoza declared that he hoped "to mobilize the free peoples of Latin America" to invade Cuba and defeat Fidel Castro.

**February 8:** Kennedy stated that the training, patrol, and technical advisory units that formed part of the Soviet troops stationed in Cuba were an object of concern for the Western Hemisphere.

**February 9:** The US Army established a fifth unit in Panama to act as a mobile brigade that could be deployed in any Central or South American country that needed to repress an internal revolt. This unit was part of the concerted effort to stir up US public opinion on the "liquidation of the Cuban issue."

**February 11:** Lieutenant Colonel John Hugh Crimmins was appointed to coordinate new plans against Cuba with the participation of different groups of counterrevolutionaries based in Miami. Crimmins was head

of special projects in the State Department's Office of Caribbean and Mexican Affairs, and an officer in the Political Intelligence Service.

**February 13:** Secretary of State Dean Rusk reiterated the US policy of hostility toward Cuba.

Two Cuban fishing boats were attacked by groups of mercenaries in a pirate vessel from the United States. Brothers Armando and Ramón López Ruiz were wounded and affirmed that there were two North Americans among their attackers.

**February 14:** The band of Francisco Pineda Cabrera, known as "Mumo," killed one militiaman and wounded another in the area of Sopimpa in the Escambray mountains, razing the place before leaving.

**February 15:** The Cuban counterrevolutionary groups Alpha 66 and the Second National Front of the Escambray announced that some of the vessels they used for nocturnal attacks on the Cuban coast had left for the area in which the Venezuelan steamship *Anzoátegui* was navigating, in order to collaborate in its capture.

The International Longshore and Warehouse Union revealed that the US boycott of maritime traffic with Cuba would extend to Poland and Yugoslavia, and sent an ultimatum warning that from February 18 ships from those nations would not be loaded or unloaded "unless they suspended their voyages to Cuba."

On the issue of trips to Cuba by young Latin Americans, President Kennedy told a journalist that the problem lay in gaining the cooperation of other Latin America countries in limiting entry into schools and universities that included political indoctrination in their curriculum. Kennedy subsequently referred to the UN plan for a research project in the Cuban Agricultural Experiment Station and affirmed that the United States would not put money into this program.

The creation of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) was activated in the Caribbean. The US press reported on efforts underway to incite the US public against Cuba. The *Washington Post* reported a plan to constitute a mini-NATO through an alliance of 10 American countries around the Caribbean. The plan was the idea of Gilberto Arias,

ex-minister of the Panamanian treasury, who stated that President John F. Kennedy had sent him a summary of the project, "given the need for a joint defense plan, as Cuba continues to be a threat to the security of the Caribbean nations."

**February 16:** José Miró Cardona, president of the CRC, told a press conference that the US State Department had decided to integrate the central core of the Latin America army it was planning to create with members of the Assault Brigade 2506.

With the military chiefs of that brigade, José Pérez San Román and Erneido Oliva, Miró affirmed that the US Defense Department had decided that the "veterans" of that failed invasion would receive special military training. He added that "the recently recruited 3,000 Cubans would also be part of this plan."

**February 18:** A US House of Representatives Sub-Committee commenced its investigation into "communist subversion" in Latin America — part of the new US plans against Cuba and for the repression of the peoples of the continent. The first informants would be Edwin Martin, assistant secretary of state, and John McCone, director of the CIA, in a secret session, and Cuban counterrevolutionary Antonio Varona in a public session.

**February 19:** President Kennedy chaired a secret meeting in Washington in which various Congress members participated. The focus of the meeting was Cuba. One of those present, Democrat Senator John Stennis, who headed the Senate commission investigating government policy on Cuba, called for a more energetic approach.

An OAS special committee once again argued that Cuba was a major threat to representative democracy and recommended that member nations break off diplomatic relations with Cuba, thus acting in line with US State Department policy to isolate Cuba in the region.

**February 20:** Addressing an Inter-American Affairs Commission of the US House of Representatives, counterrevolutionary Antonio Varona once again called for a direct US attack against Cuba.

**February 21:** Cuba's navy recovered two Sigma-type Cuban fishing vessels belonging to the Cárdenas Fishing Cooperative that had been hijacked by CIA agents close to Cayo Roque.

Eight counterrevolutionaries were captured trying to land on the Cuban coast. Their operational bases were the port of Santurce, Puerto Rico, and others in Venezuela and Costa Rica, as well as Cayo Estoicarán in Florida, and Key Elbow, under British sovereignty.

Cuba's Ministry of the Revolutionary Armed Forces (MINFAR) rebuffed a note circulated by the US Defense Department stating that Cuban aircraft had fired on a US shrimp boat in international waters north of Cuba. This was an attempt by the US government to justify a series of provocations and attacks against Cuban sovereignty.

A meeting of the joint chiefs of staff of the US forces was convened to review action in the case of an uprising in Cuba, with the objective of taking swift advantage of such an event.

The Miami police clashed with a group of Cuban counterrevolutionaries who were engaged in a brawl, and made various arrests. The disturbances started when the counterrevolutionaries attacked members of the Non-Violent Action Committee, who demonstrated with placards outside the CRC headquarters in Miami. The protestors were opposing military action against Cuba.

**February 22:** Ruth Paine made contact with the Oswald couple in Dallas during a visit to the home of George De Mohrenschildt, a veteran CIA agent.

**February 23:** The *Harold J. Ellison* (DD-864) US Navy destroyer headed another anti-Cuba action near La Boca de Guantánamo on the southeastern coast of Cuba, provocatively approaching a Cuban cabotage vessel, the *Joven Amalia*, photographing it, and deliberately running into it, causing a serious leak in its port side.

**February 26:** The Guatemalan government raised the need for collective action against Cuba at the OAS. Guatemalan Foreign Minister Jesús Unda Murillo asked for the cooperation of all OAS members in plans of aggression against Cuba.

Democrat Senator Hubert Humphrey stated that he was waiting for President Kennedy to give details of the new campaign of aggression against Cuba on March 18, when he was to meet with the representatives of six Central American republics in San José, Costa Rica.

**February 27:** Venezuelan President Rómulo Betancourt stated that the immediate issue in Latin America was “the elimination of the Cuban revolutionary government, while economic underdevelopment, cultural backwardness, low wages, the lack of land, and the misery in which people were living were all long-term problems that required the coordinated efforts of the United States, the industrialized European countries, and the Latin American nations themselves.”

He added that “national liberation movements have only one center, Havana,” but acknowledged he had no concrete evidence of this.

At the swearing in of Dominican President Juan Bosch, the presidents of Costa Rica and Honduras proposed the intervention of US forces in Cuba under the OAS flag.

At approximately 6 p.m., a US soldier guarding the perimeter of the Guantánamo naval base fired seven shots in the direction of national territory. One of them narrowly missed a Cuban sentry and another killed a cow.

**February 28:** In a confrontation with security forces in Sumidero del Río Caracusey, Trinidad municipality, the so-called National Liberation Army (ELN) was dismantled. Its main leaders, including Tomás David Pérez Díaz (Tomás San Gil) and Nilo Armando Saavedra Gil (Mandy Florencia), died in combat alongside 13 other bandits.

CIA agent Manuel del Valle Caral, a radio operator for an espionage network captured in Oriente province in January, was detained by the DSE while attempting to enter an embassy. Documents in his possession included espionage material and correspondence.

At 11 p.m., two groups of US marines in a visibly drunken state endangered the lives of Cuban sentries by firing repeatedly into an area bordering the Guantánamo naval base.

**March:** Alberto Cruz’s Rescate organization was ready to poison Fidel Castro with a capsule sent by the CIA when the leader visited

the cafeteria in the Habana Libre hotel during the shift of Santos de la Caridad Pérez, one of the conspirators. He was responsible for placing the capsule in a chocolate milkshake. The plan failed when the capsule broke inside the refrigerator in which it was concealed.

A bloc of counterrevolutionary organizations, the Anticommunist Civic Resistance (RCA), directed by the CIA from the Guantánamo naval base, planned an armed uprising throughout the country, to be initiated by the assassination of Fidel Castro during a public event at the University of Havana on March 13. The plan failed when the conspiracy was discovered. All the members were detained, including leaders Luis David Rodríguez, Ricardo Olmedo Moreno, and Jorge Espino Escarlés.

A counterrevolutionary group known as the United Armies in Arms planned to shoot Fidel Castro from an apartment in the vicinity of the baseball field within the DSE grounds. Evelio Montejo Quintana, Francisco Amigó O'Farrill, and brothers Marcos and Delfín Martín González were arrested.

Silvia Odio, an exiled Cuban supporter of the JURE, established herself in Dallas, Texas.

**March 1:** Don Rumsfeld, Republican representative for the state of Illinois, proposed that President Kennedy should review the possibility of preventing ships trading with Cuba from passing through the Panama Canal.

MINFAR reported that an Omicron-type fishing vessel returning to port in the north of Oriente province was harassed by three US destroyers navigating close to it for three hours.

In the same area, two Sigma fishing boats had to return to port empty after being harassed by two US destroyers that threatened to take their crews prisoner. This was prevented when a Soviet merchant vessel placed itself between them and the fishermen.

A US destroyer tried to block a Soviet merchant vessel as it was about to enter the port of Havana.

**March 4:** A group of US marines deployed on the Guantánamo naval base offended Cuban sentries with obscenities. One of the marines,

evidently drunk, managed to jump the perimeter fence of the base and continued with further provocations.

**March 6:** President Kennedy confirmed that the next meeting with Central American leaders in Costa Rica would consider four measures against Cuba:

1. Strict vigilance over the movement of persons to and from the hemisphere, as well as measures to be adopted by each country to verify details of such movements.
2. Restrictions on trade with Cuba.
3. The breaking off of diplomatic relations.
4. The isolation of communism in the region.

Kennedy insisted that Cuba continued to be a problem and that the United States would not allow Cuba to be a military threat.

**March 8:** A Soviet fishing vessel was fired on while trawling in international waters 70 miles from the US coast. A Boston-class cruiser and a destroyer were responsible.

**March 11:** Juan Lucio Morales (Juanín), a member of the ELN, was detained in the Almendares district of Havana.

US warplanes and ships provoked two Soviet ships traveling between Cuba and the Soviet Union on various occasions.

The *Admiral Nazimov* was overflown more than 50 times by US Air Force planes at a dangerously low level. Afterwards, it was photographed by two US Navy boats, units 779 and 400.

Another Soviet vessel traveling to Cuba, the *Archangels*, was dive-bombed by US aircraft and a helicopter at the height of the mast and then followed closely by the 779 destroyer.

Nearly 1,000 members of the mercenary brigade that invaded Cuba at the Bay of Pigs were incorporated into the US Army.

Another homicide plot was set in motion by Desmond FitzGerald, consisting of placing an exotic shell packed with explosives in an area where Fidel went underwater fishing. The plan failed.



**March 12:** Former presidential candidate Richard Nixon called for a total quarantine and partial blockade on Cuba, which would include the suspension of oil supplies from the Soviet Union, and demanded that the US government suspend foreign aid to those countries that were not in agreement with its policy of aggression toward Cuba.

**March 14:** The United States planned the establishment of a submarine base northeast of Havana. It was to be built near Nassau, Bahamas, at some 300 kilometers from the Cuban coast. *The Daily Express* confirmed that US military experts wanted to carry out submarine combat experiments in the Bahamas area close to the Cuban coast.

Counterrevolutionary elements provoked a serious incident by trying to forcibly enter the Havana residence of the Uruguayan embassy business attaché. José Antonio Lazo was killed in the resulting shootout and Obdulio Cruz Arocha, one of his accomplices, was slightly injured, while another two counterrevolutionaries escaped unharmed.

**March 15:** The Greek Merchant Navy Ministry announced that its government had banned ships sailing under its flag from transporting cargo to Cuba. This decision was taken due to US government pressure and in spite of opposition from the Greek trade unions and ship owners.

**March 16:** General Heriberto Jara condemned the proposition put forward by Delesseps Morrison, US ambassador to the OAS, that Mexico should halt traffic with Cuba, and accused the US ambassador in Mexico City of interfering in the country's internal affairs.

The House Sub-Committee of the Inter-American Affairs Commission called on President Kennedy to intensify pressure on Latin American countries maintaining diplomatic relations with Cuba to break them. The countries concerned were Mexico, Brazil, Uruguay, Bolivia, and Chile, whose governments had reiterated their position of respect for the principle of non-intervention and the self-determination of nations.

Various members of the counterrevolutionary MRR were tried in Case No. 3, 1963, including Juan Falcón Zammar and Arturo Mugarra Pupo, who were charged with crimes against the integrity and stability of the nation, and possession of explosive materials.

**March 17:** Members of Alpha 66 and the Second National Front of the Escambray fired on the Soviet *Lvov* cargo vessel, anchored in the Cuban port of Isabela de Sagua.

**March 18:** Senator George Smathers of Florida proposed the creation of a counterrevolutionary government in exile which, after being recognized by the OAS, could openly receive military and financial aid, smuggle equipment for the Cuban underground, detain merchant ships carrying strategic items to Havana, and create a liberation force. Smathers stated that the US government should try to avoid a direct clash and shift the battle against the Cuban revolution to a conflict among Latinos.

US President John F. Kennedy proposed raising a “wall” against Cuba to prevent the example of its revolution growing on the American continent. In a speech at the opening of a presidents’ conference, Kennedy confirmed that the objective of the meeting was to discuss anti-Cuba measures.

**March 21:** Two Cuban diplomatic couriers, Juan Mulén Quirós and Enrique Valdés Morgado, died when a Bolivian DC-6 aircraft from Lloyd’s Airlines crashed into the side of the Tocora volcano in Peru. The plane was sabotaged by US government agents with the intention of seizing subversive documents and weapons that they believed the Cuban officials were carrying.

Chilean poet Pablo Neruda revealed that US aircraft in Panama were awaiting news of the crash and rapidly flew to the scene of the event, reaching it before the Peruvian salvage patrol and barring them access. Peruvian Foreign Minister General Luis Edgardo Llosa later stated that neither compromising documents nor arms of any kind were found in the plane wreckage.

**March 22:** Three groups that had committed various acts against the economy and security of the state and other crimes against the population were simultaneously wiped out in Matanzas. The bandits included Juan José Catalá Coste, alias Pichi, whom the CIA had designated chief of counterrevolutionary operations in this province. In the combined FAR/DSE operation, leaders Luis León, alias Leoncito, and Eulogio García Mirabal, alias Roco, also died.

**March 25:** A special agency consisting of CIA agents and Pentagon and State Department officials was set up to interfere in Cuba's trade with other countries. These agents toured US and other ports, and even maritime stations in Asia. They worked as part of the investigations section of Trade Secretary Luther Hodge's International Trade Department and were known as "global detectives."

These global agents concentrated on preventing foodstuffs and spare parts for industry from reaching the Cuban people.

US writer Scott Nearing, author of *Dollar Diplomacy*, affirmed that the US government was planning another invasion of Cuban territory using Latin American troops. He made the charge in a Cuba solidarity meeting in Niteroi, Brazil, also attended by representatives from Argentina, Chile, Peru, and Uruguay.

**March 26:** Counterrevolutionary Tony Cuesta, who had split from Alpha 66 and founded the Commandos L, attacked the Soviet vessel *Baku*, which was loaded with sugar at the port of Caibarién. The boat was hit by rounds from a 20 millimeter cannon as well as .30 to .50 caliber machine gun fire. A magnetic mine fired on the vessel produced a hole four meters wide and half a meter high.

Alpha 66 continued to openly organize public collections in various US cities to obtain funds, despite these activities being a flagrant violation of international law.

Alpha 66 leader Antonio Veciano held a press conference to announce new plans of aggression against Cuba.

**March 27:** Fidel Castro charged the United States with the pirate attack on the Soviet mercantile vessel *Baku*.

**March 29:** Combined MINFAR and DSE forces captured members of an armed band at the Echevarría farm near Santa Cruz del Norte, Havana province. Those detained included criminal Lucas Carlos Gil Medina, alias Barba de Oro, who had murdered the child Leopoldo Martínez Rodríguez on January 9 at the Añil farm, Río Blanco, San Antonio de las Vegas, Havana province.

**April:** A MRR group that attempted to assassinate Fidel Castro at a

baseball stadium in the capital during a crucial game between national teams was dismantled. The conspirators had been instructed by elements of the naval intelligence service at the US base in Guantánamo. Enrique Rodríguez Valdés, Esteban Ramos Kessell, Alfredo Egued Farah, and Ricardo López Cabrera were arrested.

The CIA-organized training of special forces of exiled Cubans began in New Orleans. The detachment, named the Mambi Commandos, was under the command of Manuel Villafañá, ex-aviation chief of the Assault Brigade 2506. Through attacks deep inside Cuban territory, its objectives were to destroy Cuba's vital industry, oil refineries, and energy plants, as well as to supply the networks of internal agents who were preparing a generalized uprising for the end of the year.

Exfiltrated from Cuba to Florida, agent Esteban Márquez Novo, alias Plácido, had entered Cuba illegally the year before through Pinar del Río, Cuba's westernmost province, and built up a subversive organization of more than 1,000 men, with three points of communication with the CIA and hundreds of weapons and other resources. Now, he was directed to speed up the plans for an uprising in conjunction with the United Western Front organization.

McGeorge Bundy, National Security Advisor, presented the Standing Group of the NSC with a memo on Cuba offering possible new directions for US policy, including an option to move towards the gradual establishment of some kind of arrangement with Castro.

The Kennedy administration reacted by assigning more aircraft and launches to the navy and customs to patrol the Florida coasts and prevent the constant incursions into Cuba.

The *New York Times* noted: "70 heavily armed Cuban exiles planning to attack a Soviet tanker near Cuba were captured by the British on a solitary Bahamas island. Apparently, their capture was the first result of an agreement reached the previous week between Washington and London to cooperate and prevent incursions by opponents of Fidel Castro... In Miami, exiled Cubans reacted with a mixture of anger, defiance, and sadness."

Oswald wrote to V.T. Lee of the FPCC in New York and asked him

for literature for Dallas. The FBI proceeded to monitor and intercept FPCC correspondence.

Alpha 66 continued expanding its branches in Miami, New York, Chicago, and Dallas, and announced that it was to open a Los Angeles office.

At the end of the month, Oswald moved to New Orleans.

James Donovan and John Nolan, Robert Kennedy's aides, renewed contact with Cuba in order to obtain the release of 24 North Americans detained for espionage activities, including those who tried to penetrate the offices of the Chinese news agency Xinhua. A new plot to assassinate Fidel Castro was set in motion, facilitated by Desmond FitzGerald, the new chief of the SAS. The idea was to use the two officials to give the Cuban leader a diving suit impregnated with a fungus that would produce a chronic skin disease, while the oxygen equipment was contaminated with tuberculosis bacillus. The plot failed when Donovan refused to make such a "gift."

**April 1:** Raúl Ramos Ramos, known as "Meneno," and his band attacked the police unit at San José de los Ramos, Matanzas province, and killed two officers.

**April 2:** A group of Cuban counterrevolutionaries was detained when they landed in a caye of the Exuma chain of islands, some 300 kilometers north of Cuba. The British frigate *Londonderry* escorted them and their vessel, the *Violin III*, to Nassau, Bahamas. The captured men included US citizen Jerry Buchanan, who stated that the captured boats had sailed from Miami.

The colonial secretary of the Bahamas stated that counterrevolutionary attacks on Cuba from British territories would be prevented.

**April 3:** President Kennedy approved a new set of CIA operations against Cuba to start June 19. These operations would be attributable to exile groups but generally monitored by the CIA.

**April 4:** Another two counterrevolutionary bands were liquidated in Matanzas. Killed in the action were leaders Orlando de Armas, alias El Grande, and Felicito Martínez, alias Sansón. They had killed campesino

Vicente Santana Ortega in the Pedro Betancourt area, and had burned down homes and attacked property.

**April 5:** US television transmitted a program on one of the training camps for Cuban counterrevolutionaries maintained by the CIA in Florida. The previous day the US president had affirmed that he was opposed to commando actions against the Cuban government, but could not prevent such actions being carried out, considering the extent of the Florida peninsula coastline.

Jerry Buchanan, one of the crew of the *Violin III* captured by the British in Bahamas waters, confessed that they were preparing to attack a Soviet vessel in Cuban waters and acknowledged that his vessel had taken part in various incursions into Cuba with the consent of US government agencies.

US plans aimed at isolating Cuba continued at the First Pan-American Postal Conference in Miami. Costa Rica, Nicaragua, El Salvador, Honduras, and Panama attended. Also present was E.F. Unruh, director of postal services in the US-occupied Canal Zone. At the UN in January, Cuba had already exposed US maneuvers to secure its exclusion from the Postal Union of the Americas and Spain.

The Defense Department announced that 200 Cuban counterrevolutionaries recruited by the army had deserted from the Fort Benning training camp in the United States. The desertions occurred after the announcement of measures adopted by President Kennedy to restrict counterrevolutionary activities in order to avert new pirate attacks on Soviet merchant ships.

At a meeting of Central American interior ministers, more aggressive measures against Cuba were approved, through which movement of nationals to and from Cuba would be prevented by means of a passport stamp stating "Not valid for travel to Cuba." The Latin American governments were asked not to issue visas for travel to Cuba. Other measures established the freezing of transfer funds, the prosecution of so-called arms smugglers, the implementing of more effective repressive measures against national liberation movements, improved coastal vigilance, and the creation of an espionage agency to exchange information on persons belonging to liberation movements.

**April 7:** Cuban counterrevolutionary organizations in the United States received a harsh blow with the loss of an important air supply link with the interior of Cuba, due to the discovery and revelation of a secret runway on a little nearby island under British domination. This development significantly affected the counterrevolutionary bands operating in Cuba.

US Republican Senator Barry Goldwater, from the state of Arizona, urged the US government to organize another invasion of Cuba with OAS support. He also called for recognition of any military coup in Latin America. "The military in those countries are extremely anticommunist," Goldwater confirmed.

**April 8:** Oswald was sacked from Jaggers-Chiles-Stovall and informed his wife that he was going to New Orleans to look for work. He moved in with his uncle, Charles Murret, a gambling runner linked to the Carlo Marcello mafiosi family.

**April 18:** José Miró Cardona accused President Kennedy of failing to fulfill his promise of backing a new invasion of Cuba and renounced his presidency of the CRC; he charged the US government with failing in its promise to help the anticommunist cause and of having been vague in its policy on Cuba.

**April 20:** In an attempt to win White House favor, Cuban counterrevolutionary Antonio Varona, an aspirant for José Miró Cardona's position at the head of the CRC, refuted Miró's accusation. Varona committed himself to uniting the dozens of counterrevolutionary factions in order to achieve "our principal objective, which is the invasion of Cuba." He added: "We need US aid in that task."

The following week the United States sent 2,000 marines to train in the Caribbean region, as reported by the high command of that force. According to the official statement, they would be transported to waters near Cuba in five Atlantic Fleet vessels and their training period would last three months, with the objective of maintaining their efficiency.

**April 24:** President Kennedy declared that he was not in favor of a Cuban government in exile; however, he confirmed that he had discussed

certain “more decisive” measures against the Cuban revolution as a result of the Costa Rica meeting held in March. He added that he would soon present the OAS with a series of proposals to increase pressure on Cuba.

**April 25:** An aircraft flying from the United States attacked the Ñico López refinery in Havana province, launching a 100-pound shell and various napalm canisters that failed to explode. The attack was part of an offensive that had included more than 10 bombing raids against industrial or social targets.

**April 27:** A captain in the US marines was identified as the murderer of Cuban worker Rubén López Sabariego on the Guantánamo naval base. An article by journalist Jack Anderson reported that Captain Arthur J. Jackson, decorated with a medal of honor in World War II, was responsible.

Anderson said that Captain Jackson acted in self-defense but was obliged to leave the service with another three officers from the marines, and the matter was hushed up to avoid international complications. Anderson made those revelations in the Drew Pearson column, which appeared daily in various US newspapers.

**May:** The JGCE, an organization sponsored by the CIA and the gambling syndicate, was constituted in Miami, headed by Carlos Prío, Paulino Sierra, and Felipe Rivero. Its membership included the most extreme exile groups, among them the DRE, Alpha 66, Commandos L, MIRR, and the November 30 Movement. Aware of invasion plans, it proposed to engage in its own war by launching commando operations against Cuba and assassinating Fidel Castro.

These groups considered that the Kennedy administration had betrayed them and were concerned that the training camps in Central America did not really represent a plan to attack Cuba. During trips to Nicaragua and the Dominican Republic they coordinated their plans with Artime and Enrique Ruiz Williams. One of the JGCE’s most important cells was located in New Orleans, and probably participated in the Kennedy assassination.



The Revolutionary Anticommunist Front counterrevolutionary group, directed from the United States, planned an assassination attempt against Fidel Castro during the May Day event in Revolution Plaza. At the same time, various acts of sabotage on the Havana aqueduct, El Naranjito electricity sub-station, the Rampa cinema, and other public installations were planned. Pedro Hernández Álvarez, Enrique González, Francisco Cepero Capiró, and Indalecio Ferreiro Varela were all arrested.

Terrorist Orlando Bosch, leader of the MIRR and member of the JGCE, launched a statement titled "The Tragedy of Cuba," charging President Kennedy with having betrayed the cause of "Cuban liberation."

The band of Orlando de Armas Hernández, alias El Grande, was discovered in the area between Cárdenas, Carlos Rojas, and Máximo Gómez, in Matanzas province. Eight bandits were killed.

The Standing Group gave the CIA National Estimates Office the task of calculating possible scenarios in Cuba "if Castro were to die."

The Standing Group discussed the CIA estimate entitled "Events in Cuba and possible US action in the event of Castro's death." The document concluded that the most probable outcome would be that his brother Raúl or another person from the regime would take charge of the situation, with Soviet support and aid. If Castro died from unnatural causes, the United States would be widely accused of complicity, despite it being well known that Castro had many enemies.

The Standing Group decided that all courses of action were singularly unpromising.

Ramón Montenegro Sánchez, alias Monte, and his band were captured when they tried to leave Cuba via Chapelín, Varadero, in Matanzas province.

After arranging things through Colonel Sam Kail, one of Veciana's contacts with Phillips in Havana, George De Mohrenschildt brought his business partner, Haitian Clement Charles, to a meeting with a CIA staff officer in Washington, before leaving for Haiti.

Oswald ordered one thousand pamphlets stating "Hands off Cuba, Join the Fair Play for Cuba Committee, New Orleans Chapter" from the Jones Printing Company, close to the William Reily coffee company. The

address 544 Camp Street was stamped on some of them.

CIA agents Adolfo Borges and “Neno” Aday entered Cuba clandestinely at Mayorquín and Picadillo, Rancho Veloz, Las Villas province. Their objective was to establish an espionage network in the area and select locations for the infiltration and exfiltration of counter-revolutionary elements and for stashing explosives and weapons.

**May 4:** Various members of the DRE were arrested and tried in Case No. 300, 1963. They included Hans Gengler Ebner, Rafael Suárez González, and Mario Pedraza Martí, from whom a large quantity of weapons and explosives were seized. Under the leadership of Hans Gengler Ebner, whom the CIA had given a substantial sum of money, they were planning to destroy the Níco López refinery.

The State Department removed furniture and office equipment from the CRC. At the same time, it was announced that the group would no longer receive its funding of \$2.4 million per annum that the US government had been paying via the CIA. Relations between the US government and the CRC were thus suspended.

**May 7:** Detained counterrevolutionary Emilio Víctor Llufrío Bofill appeared on national television, revealing all the actions carried out by his organization and the plans underway. Llufrío Bofill was national coordinator of the Triple A organization, directed by the CIA and led from overseas by Aureliano Sánchez. He explained that his organization was trying to create a climate that would justify an attack from abroad, and added that while they had sufficient funds initially, the change of policy on the part of the US government had meant a significant reduction in that aid.

**May 10:** Oswald found employment in the William Reilly coffee company, an affluent defender of the anti-Castro groups, and wrote again to V.T. Lee of the FPCC, expressing a desire to open an office in New Orleans.

**May 11:** During the DSE search of the Havana home of Mercedes Romero Sánchez, a connection of counterrevolutionary figure Luis David Rodríguez, leader of the RCA, a large quantity of arms and a

rifle with a telescopic sight were discovered behind a false wall in the kitchen.

**May 14:** The United States managed to sign an agreement for a submarine base on Andros Island in the Bahamas. The negotiations involved the governments of the United States, Britain, and the Bahamas.

**May 15:** Fourteen vessels flying the flags of various nations were placed on a blacklist in reprisal for voyages to Cuba from January 1.

Counterrevolutionary leader Pedro Sánchez Rodríguez, alias Perico, was killed trying to escape from DSE agents who caught him in a house in which he was hiding in Güira de Melena. Three of his collaborators were captured in the action. Sánchez Rodríguez and his band were operating in Matanzas province, particularly in Jagüey Grande and Ciénaga de Zapata, where they engaged in many crimes.

Other members of the group had been killed or captured in April, when units of the FAR and DSE began to track them down.

**May 18:** Delio Almeida Martínez, who had killed two agricultural workers and militiamen, was captured along with four members of his band by the combined forces of state security and the Rebel Army at the Mercedes farm in Calimete, Matanzas province.

Their crimes included attacks against Pedro Sotolongo Noda and his son on February 1 at the Domitila farm in Amarillas.

Shortly before that, the Delio Almeida group had killed campesino Víctor Martínez Varela during an attack on a people's store in Pablo de la Torriente Brau, Colón municipality, in the same province. In mid-1962, Román Sánchez, a farmer responsible for public order on the Rubén Martínez Villena people's farm in Manguito, Matanzas province, had also been murdered.

**May 19:** A pirate launch sailing from the United States opened fire with a machine gun in the direction of La Boca, Tarará River, some 15 kilometers east of Havana. When a response was mounted the vessel turned tail.

**May 22:** The crew of a US jeep attacked a truck of Cuban troops with

stones while changing the guard on the perimeter of the Guantánamo naval base.

**May 23:** Cuba's ambassador to the UN, Carlos Lechuga, denounced the OAS offensive against Cuba. He described the Human Rights Commission report to the OAS council, which alleged violations of the human rights of counterrevolutionary prisoners, as "calumnious" and "full of hatred." This occurred just when the world was scandalized by events at Birmingham, Alabama, where political prisoners had been brutally beaten by the police and mauled by dogs trained to attack.

**May 26:** MINFAR announced a criminal attack by a US Army aircraft that opened fire with machine guns on Cayo Francés, Varadero, Matanzas province, endangering the lives of Cuban and Soviet workers who were prospecting for oil.

**June:** According to US investigators, Operation Red Cross went into action with the objective of kidnapping two Soviet colonels in Cuba, so that they would reveal the presence of missiles in Cuba. This was planned by the Alpha 66 and Commandos L groups in conjunction with the JM/WAVE CIA station in Miami, *Life* magazine, and former ambassador William Pawley. It was led by Eduardo Pérez, alias Bayo, who died when his group's vessel sunk off the Cuban coast.

A chain of events that led to the collapse of the operation at Lake Pontchartrain, New Orleans, began when an FBI informant stated that a group of Cuban exiles planned to bomb the Shell oil refinery in Cuba. The next day, a group of customs agents arrived at a landing area south of Miami, precisely when a biplane was to be loaded with 300-pound bombs and gallons of napalm.

Carlos García Vázquez, Mariano Fernández Suárez, Pedro Julio Espinoza Martínez, Julio Hernández, José A. Marrero Frank, Horacio Arquímedes Ocumares Leyva, and Armando Cueto Constantino, members of the MRP counterrevolutionary group who were plotting to assassinate Fidel Castro and simultaneously effect sabotage and subversion activities, were captured. C-3 explosives, a .45 caliber machine gun, splinter bombs, and various pistols were discovered.

The NSC Standing Group agreed to explore the possibilities of establishing channels of communication with Fidel Castro.

Oswald was seen in Guy Banister's office by his secretary, Delphine Roberts.

John Roselli, the Mafia man on Cuban issues, dined with William Harvey, ex-chief of the CIA's Cuba task force.

In New Orleans, Oswald applied for a new passport, which he received the next day.

**June 3:** Cuban counterrevolutionaries who received training in Fort Jackson and were part of the Bay of Pigs invasion force added their voices to the campaign to convince young Cubans to join them. A spokesman for those groups stated: "We are paying special attention to young people of military age who are not joining our ranks or those of the US army."

**June 4:** Pedro González Sánchez's band killed Manuel Acosta Mederos, a 78-year-old campesino, and his adopted son Manuel Rodríguez Pino at the Maizal de Vila farm, San Pedro, Trinidad municipality. His son was found with nearly 40 bullet wounds and the elderly man also had a large number of wounds.

President Kennedy ordered the US ambassadors to Britain, Greece, and other Western nations to communicate Washington's displeasure at vessels transporting merchandise to Cuba.

Fourteen ships from other countries — including a Danish vessel — were added to the US black list, meaning that they could not load US cargo. There were now 97 boycotted merchant ships.

The Kennedy administration put pressure on the Chilean government to break off relations with Cuba, and threatened economic reprisals if Chile failed to back US plans against Cuba, which included the measures of stamping diplomatic passports with "Not valid for Cuba," and obliging all passengers planning to visit Cuba to obtain official permission.

**June 11:** Attorney General Robert Kennedy stated that efforts would be increased to isolate Cuba economically and politically.

**June 17:** Efraín Peña Peña, second in command of the Pedro González Sánchez band, was killed in an operation in the area of Cuyují in Palmarito, Trinidad.

**June 19:** After a meeting of the Special Group, President Kennedy approved a new sabotage program against Cuba with the objective of fomenting “resistance and disaffection” that would lead to significant defections and instability.

**June 21:** The US government complained to Britain over the use of Camp Atkinson’s tanks to store oil en route to Cuba. Political circles in British Guyana regarded the US objection as an excuse to interfere in that country’s internal affairs. US companies refused to supply oil to British Guyana in order to aggravate the situation.

Delesseps Morrison, US ambassador to the OAS, threatened an armed intervention in Cuba in the event of any “Cuban provocation.” Morrison said that a concrete case of provocation would be necessary to invoke the Rio de Janeiro Treaty to use arms against Cuba.

**June 24:** The United States tried to pressure the World Committee of the International Architects Union to change the venue of its Seventh International Congress, scheduled to take place in Cuba at the end of September. This event would be the most important to be celebrated in Cuba since the victory of the revolution.

**June 26:** The State Department threatened 59 US students who decided to travel to Cuba with imprisonment on their return. The US authorities announced that they could receive a fine of \$5,000 and five years’ imprisonment.

**June-July:** Operations carried out by the security forces inflicted heavy blows on the clandestine CIA organizations within Cuba. Some of the most important counterrevolutionary organizations: the MRR, RCA, Triple A, ELN, the Montecristi Group, and others were virtually annihilated, and several armed groups in the central Escambray mountains were dismantled by the FAR.

The Alpha 66 terrorist group organized a training camp in the

Dominican Republic to prepare an infiltration of its men into the mountains of Oriente province. Its plans were focused on organizing a guerrilla struggle to have territory under its control when an invasion force being trained in Nicaragua landed on the island.

A plan to destabilize the Cuban economy went into action. Mario García Kohly, a counterrevolutionary leader, and CIA agent Robert Morrow proposed to counterfeit large sums of Cuban currency and introduce them into Cuba, for which they received \$20,000 from the CIA.

**July:** The band known as La Pitiblanca killed militiaman Argelio Rodríguez Castellón on the Carolina farm.

Lee Harvey Oswald was sacked from his job at Reily coffee.

Nano Pérez and 12 members of his band were captured in the Santo Domingo area, Las Villas province.

The National Liberation Movement counterrevolutionary group set up an ambush for Fidel Castro when he visited a Havana residence where many veterans of the Moncada attack were gathered for a modest ceremony to recall that event. Enrique Falcón Beltrán, Ramón Soria Licea, Eliecer Senra Ramírez, and Antonio Senra Lugeira were detained.

Operation Rafael, a CIA-sponsored project to assassinate Fidel Castro during the July 26 Moncada commemoration in Revolution Plaza was set in motion. The CIA sent the conspirators a gun with a telescopic sight and a silencer. Mario Salabarría and US intelligence agents Alberto Cruz Caso and Arturo Verona took part. The plan was frustrated by security.

A group from the MRR also planned to assassinate Fidel Castro at July 26 festivities in Revolution Plaza. The plot consisted of firing an 81 millimeter mortar at the presidential platform from the patio of a neighboring house. Luis Montes de Oca and Braulio Roque Arosamena were arrested.

A press dispatch announced that US officers were training Cuban exiles for an invasion of Cuba and that bases for troops and tank battalions were being organized in Nicaragua. The US troops and tanks

were to arrive from bases in Panama, and their chief, General O'Meara, was to arrive in Nicaragua on August 2.

A group of exiled Cubans arrived in New Orleans from Miami and went to the training camp near Lake Pontchartrain. They belonged to the Anticommunist Brigade headed by Frank Sturgis and Gerry Patrick Hemming. The Church Commission reported years later: "A, a lifelong friend of AM/LASH, had helped to obtain explosives for the camp..." A was the codename utilized by the Church Commission to conceal the name of Víctor Hernández Espinosa, who obtained the explosives from Rich Lauchli. Jim Garrison's investigation revealed that both Oswald and David Ferrie were seen at the camp.

A group of Cuban counterrevolutionaries attempted to blow up the Cuban vessels *Oriente*, *Las Villas*, and *Bahía de Siguanea*, anchored at Veracruz, Mexico. The boats were loaded with cargo for Cuba. Carlos Fernández Trujillo, Mexican representative of the CRC; José María Toral; Agustín Santana González; Carlos Samá Rabelo; and Alejandro del Valle Suero, all from the same organization, were arrested.

State Department officials announced that the US students who traveled to Cuba in spite of official threats of a prison term on their return would have their passports cancelled.

**July 3:** Journalist Robert Taber, former secretary of the FPCC, stated that Senators Thomas J. Dodd and James O. Eastland from the Senate Internal Security Sub-Committee were persecuting him and terrorizing members and sympathizers of the committee, an organization of US intellectuals, professionals, religious leaders, and other citizens, as well as distinguished international public figures like Jean-Paul Sartre, Simone de Beauvoir, and Kenneth Tynan.

**July 4:** The crisis within the CRC reached a climax when a further 16 leaders decided to leave the organization. Those individuals went on to form the Rescate organization.

**July 6:** Bandit Pedro León Hernández, alias Perico, was captured in the area of Manacal. He had been active since 1960 and was the guide for Osvaldo Ramírez's band.



**July 8:** The United States banned all financial transactions with Cuba, freezing Cuba's assets of millions of dollars deposited in US banks, with the aim of intensifying its economic isolation.

By this date the total number of boats from Western countries placed on the US black list had risen to 128.

**July 12:** The Cuban foreign minister categorically denied the US government's claim that passengers transported by Cubana Airlines to the Grand Cayman, a British possession, were Cuban subversive agents.

**July 17:** Weapons, secret writing materials, money, and CIA instructions aimed at organizing military espionage and acts of sabotage against the Cuban economy were seized.

**July 18:** It was announced in Miami that 400 Cubans enrolled in the US Army were to initiate a military attack against Cuba from a base in Nicaragua. Carlos Alberto Montaner stated that he had met with ex-president Luis Somoza to go over the plan. For his part, Manuel Artime said that Nicaragua was to play an important role in the new invasion of Cuba.

**July 19:** A Republican House Sub-Committee called on Kennedy to impose more aggressive measures as part of the illegal blockade of Cuba. It argued that Kennedy was ignoring restrictions established by law over foreign aid. According to the law, the United States should suspend all aid to countries whose boats transported oil and any other strategic or military materials to Cuba.

**July 21:** An unidentified source stated that Manuel Artime was staying in the residence of former president Luis Somoza on the outskirts of Managua, the venue for meetings attended by president of the republic René Schick, National Guard chief Anastasio Somoza, Jr., and Allegrett, the Nicaraguan consul in Miami.

**July 22:** A team including Rolando Matheu Paz and brothers Manuel and Francisco Marrero Castillo was captured trying to infiltrate Cuba.

**July 25:** The US government imposed on Cuba another illegal measure of harassment, provocation, and aggression in the form of a special

identification stamp on US bills in circulation at the Guantánamo naval base, so that they would only be legal tender on the base or within the United States. This was calculated to create a new point of tension by paying Cuban workers at the base in the, who were paid in dollars, and those who bought what they needed in Cuba itself.

**July 30:** Four members of an espionage network went on trial. They were Ángel Paleo Nieto, chief of the network; José Manuel Rodríguez Suárez, Raciél Royer Sarriegui, and Enrique García Palomino, all of whom were sending military, political, and economic information to the CIA.

At the same time, Manuel Álvarez Fanego, Luis Prieto Fernández, and Ignacio Madrugá Alonso were sentenced to 20-year prison terms, and Manuel Álvarez Pita to 15 years.

**July 31:** The FBI seized more than one ton of dynamite, crates of mortars, and napalm at a house near Lake Pontchartrain on the outskirts of New Orleans, very close to Frank Sturgis's camp. The building belonged to William McLaney, an ex-casino operator in Havana and a known anti-Castroite.

**July–September:** A homicide plot was hatched on US territory by Cuban terrorist Orlando Bosch and mafioso Mike McLaney, which consisted of bombing Fidel Castro's residence in Cojimar, east of Havana. The plan failed when the bombs were seized in a raid by the FBI and the subjects were detained. They were subsequently released as a result of CIA intervention.

**August:** A planned uprising by counterrevolutionary groups belonging to the Civic Resistance bloc was aborted. The project included an assassination attempt against Fidel Castro, for which they had various high-precision weapons. Arrested in relation to this plot were Palmiro Bartolomé Santiago, Miguel Argueo Gallastegui Zayas, Gilberto Amat Rodríguez, Héctor Ballester Fernández, Honorio Torres Perdomo, and others.

Lee Harvey Oswald was registered by the House Un-American Activities Committee as secretary of the FPCC in New Orleans.

Oswald went to Carlos Bringuier's store and expressed his wish to train exiled Cubans within his group.

Oswald indicated that he wished to return to the Soviet Union. Marina, his wife, wrote to the Soviet embassy in Washington inquiring about their application, made in February. She had already written to state that Oswald was expressing a sincere desire to return.

Rolando Cubela, agent AM/LASH, traveled to Brazil and then on to France, where he was interviewed by the CIA. On this occasion the final details for a plot to assassinate Fidel Castro and instigate a military coup within Cuba were discussed. This plot was part of plans drawn up by the SAS to achieve a climate in Cuba that would facilitate the planned invasion. The following year, the CIA linked Cubela up with Artime so that they could coordinate their operations.

**End of August:** Six people later testified that they had seen Oswald in Clinton, Louisiana, in the company of David Ferrie and Clay Shaw, in an activity of the Congress for Racial Equality.

**August 1:** Kennedy threatened the students who traveled to Cuba, saying they should be punished for their lack of concern for the security and interests of US foreign policy. He alleged that some of the leaders of the group appeared to be communists.

Miner de la Torre Martínez, alias Gallego, was captured with his band in the area of Loma Blanca, Cascajal, Las Villas province, in a Cuban security forces' operation.

**August 3:** CIA plans to attack Cuba were denounced. According to the *Washington Post*, while invasion was almost never discussed, the US government was channeling all its efforts into clandestine operations that consisted of sending contraband money, arms, and other military supplies to Cuba.

In Miami, more than 1,000 Cubans and North Americans were openly receiving military instruction and undertaking shooting practice, treks through subtropical forest, and survival exercises, with a view to attacking Cuba. An "Antonio Maceo" brigade had been formed and the Miami Police Department Rifle Club was made available for training.

Combat maneuvers took place openly on the outskirts of Miami. The battalion was commanded by US officer Donald Miller and had the protection of the CIA, FBI, and State Department.

**August 9:** Oswald had a public altercation with Carlos Bringuier and other Cuban exiles, when caught handing out propaganda for the FPCC near Bringuier's store. The police intervened and arrested everyone.

**August 14:** MINFAR announced that two Cuban fishing boats stolen by counterrevolutionary elements in the proximity of Cayo Anguila had been recovered and the assailants captured. They included four members of counterrevolutionary organizations based in Miami who had been infiltrated into Cuba by the CIA.

**August 15:** According to a report drawn up by the Truth about Cuba Committee, an organization devoted to "the study of the Cuban situation," the policy followed by the US government in relation to Cuba was costing taxpayers more than \$2 million per year.

The factors contributing to increased costs for the US public included the higher price of sugar, maintenance of the Cuban counter-revolutionaries, the cost of the failed Bay of Pigs invasion, sums paid in compensation for damages to the Cuban revolution, and the loss of taxation on trade with Cuba, which was totally suppressed by the Washington government.

An unidentified aircraft bombed the Bolivia (previously Cunagua) sugar plant in Camagüey province. The attack was directed against the mill and endangered the lives of defenseless people while they were sleeping in their homes.

**August 16:** Oswald was once again seen distributing pro-Cuba literature in the streets of New Orleans.

According to the US trade secretary, a further 11 merchant ships had been included on the black list, taking the total number up to 156.

**August 18:** A pirate aircraft launched rockets at the port of Casilda in Las Villas province. One of the shells ignited a railroad wagon and the other destroyed a house. The aircraft made off in a northerly direction.

**August 19:** The Patricio Lumumba sulphur-metal plant at the Santa Lucía estuary on the northern coast of Pinar del Río came under attack when two launches from a “mother ship” landed a group of individuals belonging to the Mambi Commandos. They opened fire with bazookas and heavy-caliber machine guns against the plant, causing considerable damage. The attack was repelled by the local militia. In their retreat the attackers were supported by heavy-caliber machine gun fire from the mother ship.

The launch, an outboard motor, an 88.9 millimeter bazooka, two .30 caliber machine guns, seven bullet casings, a tank of gasoline, seven detonator flares, a bazooka rocket, and four luminous buoys were seized.

**August 20:** The magazine *Reader's Digest Selections* proclaimed that the Cuban people had to be crushed through intimidation or by promises of material goods, women, alcohol, narcotics, exemption from work, tax concessions, and even celestial recompense for taking action against the “infidels.”

*Selections* had taken these ideas from public statements made in *The American Legion* magazine by Frank Howley, retired brigadier general, vice-president of New York University, and ex-military commander of Berlin. Howley proposed to head a counterrevolution with “strong, dedicated, implacable leaders” who would have a base “from which to harass the enemy and return... a place where they could arm and train, organize, and spread their propaganda throughout the world.”

Bandit Rigoberto Tartabull Chacón, known as Berto, died in combat in Manacal de Paula, Seibabo neighborhood in Manicaragua municipality.

**August 21:** In a radio debate with Carlos Bringuier at the New Orleans WDSU station, Oswald professed himself a Marxist and supporter of the Cuban revolution. His background as a defector to the Soviet Union was publicly disclosed during this broadcast.

**August 22:** The John Birch Society, a fascist organization leading the battle against racial integration in the United States, gave substantial

funding to the Somoza brothers, who also received CIA aid, so that they could go ahead with the so-called Central American formula against Cuba.

A climate began to develop within the counterrevolutionary groups similar to that preceding the April 1961 Bay of Pigs invasion. Sabotage, the infiltration of agents, and the traffic of counterrevolutionaries between the United States and Nicaragua had been notably intensifying for more than one month. Meanwhile, a recruitment and propaganda center had opened in New York, while various training centers were operating in Florida, New Jersey, and Tampa.

**August 26:** The San José, Costa Rica, weekly *Libertad* announced that Luis Somoza was constructing a base from which to attack Cuba. An aerodrome was to be built on the border with Nicaragua on the Murciélago farm, a huge estate extending over 30,000 hectares recently acquired by the Somoza brothers in Costa Rica.

The minister of public security, the chief of military intelligence, and other Costa Rican officials left for Managua to attend the conference of the military police chiefs of Central America and the United States. The meeting was to consider improving control over alleged communist activity and measures preventing travel to Cuba and other socialist nations.

**September:** A counterrevolutionary group planned to attack Fidel Castro with hand grenades during a public event on the 28th to mark the anniversary of the Committees for the Defense of the Revolution (CDRs), in Revolution Plaza. The plan was frustrated and the conspirators arrested, including Ángel Mesa Puentes, Dositeo Fernández Fariñas, and Roberto Porto Infanzón.

CIA agent Manuel Díaz Isalgué was infiltrated into Cuba to recruit ex-Rebel Army commander Ramón Guín Díaz into Rolando Cubela's group as part of Operation AM/TRUNK, whose objective was to win over a group of Cuban officers to support an internal coup which would coincide with the planned attack.

In a press dispatch, Daniel Harker, correspondent for AP agency, distorted a statement by Fidel Castro on CIA plans against Cuban

leaders made in a casual conversation with him in the Brazilian embassy in Havana.

The CIA station in Brazil reported on a secret meeting in São Paulo with Rolando Cubela, agent AM/LASH, where he explained that he was prepared to make an attempt on the life of Fidel Castro.

Oswald, David Phillips, and Antonio Veciana met in Dallas.

Oswald obtained a tourist visa to travel to Mexico in that country's consulate in New Orleans.

Oswald visited the Cuban and Soviet consulates in Mexico City to try to obtain visas to travel to the Soviet Union.

Perry Russo, a witness in Jim Garrison's inquiry, stated that he had been present in David Ferrie's house with Oswald and Clay Shaw when the latter proposed the idea of killing Kennedy and blaming Fidel Castro.

Marita Lorenz stated that she had been at a meeting in Miami at the residence of Orlando Bosch, also attended by Oswald, Sturgis, Pedro Luis Díaz Lanz, and Alex Rourke.

William Attwood, US ambassador to the UN, contacted Cuban Ambassador Carlos Lechuga at the residence of journalist Lisa Howard in New York, and they discussed a possible dialogue between Cuba and the United States. Attwood later stated that McGeorge Bundy had told him that Kennedy was in favor of moving toward a rapprochement with Cuba in order to extricate Fidel Castro from the Soviet embrace, possibly forgetting the Bay of Pigs episode and returning relations to a normal state.

Robert McKeown, an arms trafficker, received a visit from two subjects whom he identified as Oswald and a Cuban called Hernández, who wanted to purchase rifles with telescopic lenses.

**September 1:** The El Marinero band was captured close to Taje Lake, San Pedro, Trinidad municipality, Las Villas province.

**September 3:** Criminal and counterrevolutionary chief Pedro González Sánchez was killed in a clash with Rebel Army forces and the militia in the area of La Barca, Trinidad municipality. Mario Soler, known as El Matancero, was also killed. Both were notorious for the killing of

campesino families in the city of Trinidad.

The secretariat of the International Union of Students (IUS), based in Prague, approved a call alerting the world student body to a possible attack on Cuba. The IUS observed that reports from the Caribbean — in particular from Guatemala, Costa Rica, Panama, Nicaragua, and Honduras — mentioning troop mobilizations, the accelerated preparation of landing strips, the departure of organized saboteurs, and recent attacks on Cuban territory perpetrated by air and naval units, demonstrated that peace in the region continued to be threatened despite US government promises.

**September 4:** Two aircraft of unknown origin flew over Cuban territory in Las Villas province. On nearing the air base there, they were repelled by the artillery and managed to escape.

**September 6:** The *Siempre* magazine published a protest by Mexican journalist Víctor Rigo Galán, in which he stated: “The US House of Representatives has put a price on our sovereignty.” He went on to note that Mexican sovereignty was damaged by “the US decision that all economic aid should be suspended to those countries which, within a space of 70 days, fail to terminate their commercial transactions with Cuba. The decision is not in itself directed at Cuba, but against us, because it tends to reduce the exercise of our sovereignty.”

**September 7:** Airplanes departing from the United States flew over Las Villas province. On being repelled by artillery fire, they dropped explosives and retreated. One of the bombs fell on the house of FAR teacher Fabric Aguilar Noriega. He was killed and three of his children injured.

A few minutes later, in the same area, two aircraft providing cover for the earlier planes were intercepted by the Cuban air force and forced to flee.

**September 8:** Various airplanes flying from the United States attacked the Brasil (previously Jaronú) sugar mill on the northern coast of Camagüey province.

A further two aerial attacks on Santa Clara and Santiago de Cuba



were frustrated. There was no loss of life, and a few hours later, a group of Cuban exiles in Miami claimed "their aircraft had bombed and completely destroyed a sugar plantation in Cuba."

**September 11:** Carlos Prío, counterrevolutionary and former Cuban president, announced that he was to meet with Central American and Venezuelan leaders to develop US plans of aggression against Cuba.

A light aircraft supplying arms to counterrevolutionaries operating in Central American territory landed in Cienfuegos. Teodoro Picado Lara, the pilot, was a Somoza agent and son of Teodoro Picado, ex-president of Costa Rica. He had been assistant to General Anastasio Somoza, Jr., chief of the Nicaraguan army, and the administrator of the Murciélago farm, which had become an operations base for aircraft making pirate incursions into Cuba.

Puerto Cabezas and the Islas de Maíz, on Nicaraguan territory, were also part of this network of operational bases against Cuba, which included the Tortuguero camp on the Caribbean coast of Costa Rica and other farms owned by Cuban counterrevolutionary millionaires on the border with Nicaragua.

The landing occurred because Cuban anti-aircraft batteries opened fire on the aircraft and the pilot decided to land before being shot down.

**September 12:** The San José weekly *Libertad* exposed an extensive plan of provocations and attacks on Cuba from the border of Nicaragua and Costa Rica aimed at sparking a conflict between Cuba and Central America.

On the same date, Luis Somoza, the bloody Nicaraguan ex-dictator, and US Secretary of State Dean Rusk met in an attempt by the State Department and the CIA to avoid direct responsibility. President Kennedy stated that a military invasion of Cuba would not be in the US interest, given that it was a dangerous issue that could involve many other countries.

**September 13:** The Federal Court revealed that the pilot of the airplane that crashed in North Carolina after a mysterious explosion

on January 6, 1960, was transporting arms and munitions for Cuban counterrevolutionaries. Thirty-four people died in the accident, including the pilot, Dale Southard.

**September 14:** Benjamín Acosta Valdés, a Pentagon military intelligence agent who headed an espionage network transmitting information on military defense and resources, was sentenced in a Cuban court. After leaving Cuba in May, Acosta Valdés was recruited and trained in espionage and transmission and reception methods. On July 21, he was infiltrated via the Matanzas coast. Subsequently he began to operate from a house in Havana, where he was arrested by members of the DSE while transmitting to a Miami espionage station.

Specialized communications equipment was seized from the house, as well as a Geiger counter to detect radioactivity, a miniature compass, two cipher pads, a work plan, a magnifying glass, microfilm, a Browning pistol with two chambers, and 100 bullets.

**September 20:** It was revealed that a group of 100 Cuban counter-revolutionaries had been training for three months in Central Park, New York.

Munitions testing was carried out by a group in the New Jersey mountains under trainers Gaspar Vilate and Enrique Abascal.

“We would prefer to go and have a coffee rather than listen to President Kennedy’s falsehoods on the Cuban revolution,” Carlos Lechuga told the press at the UN. The text of Kennedy’s UN speech had been circulated in advance among the delegations. In his sole reference to Cuba, after affirming the US public’s faith in the principle of self-determination for all peoples, Kennedy attacked the Cuban revolutionary government.

**September 22:** Dean Rusk announced that he would ask the foreign ministers of the “banana republics” for reports on the steps they had taken to limit the activities of the progressive sectors in the region, and the cooperation that each one of them could offer in relation to the new plans against Cuba.

**September 26:** A planned attack on the life of Fidel Castro and other leaders of the revolution was thwarted. It was to be carried out by CIA agents Federico Hernández González and Pierre Quang Diez de Ure, as well as other elements from the Revolutionary Unity Insurreccional Front (FIUR) and the Triple A. The action consisted of placing 60 pounds of C-4 explosive in a drain under the platform from where Fidel Castro was to preside over the event marking the third anniversary of the CDRs. Francisco Blanco de los Cuertos, Jesús Rodríguez Mosquera, Orlando de la Cruz, and Luis Arencibia Pérez were also arrested in relation to this plot.

**September 27:** Costa Rican Foreign Minister Daniel Oduber confirmed in New York that plans of aggression against Cuba were the key issue at a meeting with Dean Rusk, US secretary of state, attended by the Central American foreign ministers.

**End of September:** Oswald and two Latinos visited the home of Silvia Odio in Dallas to ask for her help on behalf of the anti-Castro JURE group. The following day, one of the Latinos told Silvia Odio on the phone that Oswald, an excellent sharpshooter, had said that the Cubans had to kill Kennedy in order to secure Castro's collapse.

**October:** David Phillips, who headed the CIA station in Mexico City, was promoted to chief of Cuban operations, and traveled to Washington for consultations.

Oswald returned to Dallas after his failed attempt to travel to Cuba from Mexico. Ten days later, Ruth Paine found him work in the city's book depository.

Kennedy discussed the possibility of improving relations with Cuba in an interview with journalist Jean Daniel. Kennedy, who knew that Daniel was to visit Cuba, asked him to communicate his impressions of Fidel Castro on his return.

The Standing Group approved 13 CIA sabotage operations on Cuban targets, scheduled for November through January.

Rolando Cubela met with a Spanish-speaking CIA officer in Paris, whom he recognized some years later as David Sánchez Morales, chief of

operations at JM/WAVE at the time. Cubela stated that the conversation concerned the assassination of Fidel Castro.

**October 1:** Under the cover of night, a pirate vessel attacked Cayo Guín on the northern coast of Oriente province and destroyed a saw mill, injuring various people.

**October 3:** The Standing Group approved nine covert operations in Cuba, including additional sabotage operations.

The second Agrarian Reform Act was passed, eradicating the rural bourgeoisie, who provided significant economic support for the bandit groups. The maximum landholding was set at 210 hectares.

**October 7:** Addressing the UN General Assembly, Carlos Lechuga denounced the constant acts of aggression against the Cuban people instigated by the United States, and the plans underway in Central America to unleash a new offensive, funded and organized by the Pentagon, the CIA, and the State Department.

**October 18:** Admiral Arleigh E. Burke, former chief of the US Navy, closely linked to the Pentagon and government circles in Washington, called for a US invasion of Cuba. "We will not tolerate a communist government in the Western Hemisphere and plan to destroy it."

**October 20:** Pascual González Muñoz, a militiaman, was killed on guard at his workplace, the Unit 207-8 carpentry workshop in San Elías Street, Rosalía district, Guanabacoa, Havana.

**October 22:** During the night, Cuban air force planes intercepted and attacked two V-20 pirate launches as they were attempting to land arms and saboteurs in Cuba on the southern coast of Pinar del Río province. The Cuban aircraft also located and attacked the "mother ship" that had transported the launches. The enemy action was frustrated in a coordinated air force and coastal defense action. CIA agents Clemente Inclán Werner, chief of CIA security in actions organized against Cuba from the *Rex* vessel, and crew members Luis Montero Carrazana and Roberto Lizano Rodríguez were captured.

Spokesmen from the Commandos L stated that Cuban counter-

revolutionary groups under CIA direction were given every assistance in their anti-Cuba actions, citing the case of the Mambi Commandos, who had engaged in attacks on Cuba from points in US territory.

The Nicaraguan *La Prensa* newspaper revealed the existence of Cuban exile training camps in the areas of Prinzapolca and Bluefields, where the Somoza brothers owned farms.

Meanwhile, in Costa Rica, the *Libertad* weekly stated that Cuban exiles were being trained in the Tortuguero area. One of the main camps was on Cocal Island in the San Juan River estuary, and another two were located in Sarapiquí and on the estate of Vico Schtarke, the Nazi leader of a private fascist army.

Some weeks previously, *Libertad* had noted that two Mustang (P-51) aircraft with short-wave radios had been purchased by Cuban counter-revolutionaries for an attack on the Costa Rican coast, to be blamed on Cuba. It emphasized that the purchase was made via the CIA. Finally, *Libertad* stated that counterrevolutionaries were also receiving training in El Salvador, where there was a parachute regiment being trained by the US to form the nucleus of the invasion force.

**October 24:** A twin-engine Piper aircraft from Canada landed at José Martí International Airport in Havana after stopping over in Miami. It was piloted by Ronald Patrick Lee and William David Mean, both Canadian citizens. Customs discovered the supposed gallons of jam and detergent they were carrying contained grenades, detonators, magnetic mines, etc. Their interrogation confirmed that they were both CIA agents.

Cuban port worker Orlando de Armas discovered a bomb concealed in the *Las Villas* boat arriving from Genoa, Italy, when it was about to be unloaded.

**October 25:** Faure Chomón, minister of communications, displayed explosives, detonators, and propaganda sent to Cuba in packets posted from the United States and other countries.

**October 30:** Fidel Castro appeared on national television to inform the Cuban people of the imperialist aggression against Cuba. He also

mentioned the capture of a CIA-instructed group of mercenaries from the “mother ship” *Rex*, who had been trying to land on the Cuban coast.

The CIA continued training counterrevolutionaries. Close to 1,000 were being instructed by a Guatemalan colonel named Blanco and a US officer nicknamed Willy, in the north of Guatemala in El Petén department. Similar camps were identified close to the port of San José on the Guatemalan Pacific coast; three more were located in Honduran territory in Valle de Zamorano, Paraíso, and close to Juticalpa; while another four bases were established in Nicaragua.

**October 31:** Enrique Rodríguez Valdés, Carmelo Cuadra Hernández, and Esteban Ramos Kessell, all members of the RCA counterrevolutionary organization, went on trial in Case No. 391, 1963. They had planned to kill Fidel Castro at the University of Havana, where he was scheduled to appear during the March 13 anniversary event.

**End of October:** Desmond Fitzgerald, chief of the SAS, met Rolando Cubela in Paris to coordinate a planned coup d’état in Cuba and the assassination of Fidel Castro.

**November:** With President Kennedy’s approval, Ambassador William Attwood phoned René Vallejo, Fidel Castro’s aide, to propose a preliminary agenda for possible talks between Cuba and the United States.

In a memo, the CIA made reference to Paulino Sierra, leader of the JGCE in these terms: “Although based among the Miami exile leaders since March 1963, he continues to be a mystery man in terms of his means and objectives.”

Information given by Thomas Mosley, a secret service special agent, revealed that “Homero,” leader of the anti-Castro November 30 Movement affiliated to the JGCE, had affirmed that his group had sufficient funds to make an arms purchase “as soon as we have taken care of Kennedy.”

McGeorge Bundy informed Ambassador William Attwood that President Kennedy wanted to meet with him on his return from Dallas to discuss possible negotiations with Cuba.

**November 2:** Three CIA agents captured in the south of Pinar del Río province appeared before Cuban television cameras and the national press. During their appearance they described all the inner workings of the sinister plans of aggression against Cuba, inspired, fomented, protected, and funded by the US government.

**November 3:** The British government authorized the United States' "free use," for a 20-year extendable period, of the waters around the Bahamas, north of Cuba, in order to carry out submarine "experiments."

The revolutionary government charged that British territory was being used as a base for pirate attacks on Cuba.

**November 5:** Bandit chief Nicolás Viera Gutiérrez, alias Yumba, was discovered with another bandit on Los Cerros farm, Fomento municipality, Las Villas province. Both were killed while resisting arrest.

**November 6:** CIA agent Juan Armestoy Domínguez was killed in Cuba as the result of an accidental encounter with the police. The two collaborators accompanying him were detained and large quantities of arms and military equipment were seized. Armestoy had just infiltrated the island through Matanzas province.

**November 7:** Five counterrevolutionaries went on trial for killing militiaman Vicente Pérez Noa, a member of the United Party of Socialist Revolution in Ceiba de Agua, who, with Juan Pérez Moreno, had been assaulted while on duty in a rural area. Their killers, Roberto Echevarría and Enrique González Cepero, were captured barely 72 hours after the crime. Omar Prieto Vera, Ismael Marchante Hernández, alias Yiyi, and Enrique Cruz Abreu, who organized and supplied the band and participated in the meeting in which the plot was set up, were detained later.

**November 8:** The Havana revolutionary court sentenced CIA agents Antonio Cobelas Rodríguez, Orlando Sánchez Saraza, Juan M. Milián Rodríguez, and José S. Bolaños Morales to the maximum penalty after they were arrested by FAR units in an attempt to disembark in Cuba. All the military equipment they had brought with them was seized and they confessed their missions of subversion and espionage.

**November 12:** The hanged and tortured body of Néstor David Torres Cabrera was discovered. Torres, who worked as the administrator of the Chafarina farm in Guasimal, Sancti Spiritus municipality, had been kidnapped on October 18 by the “Maro” Borges band.

**November 13:** Argimiro Fonseca Fernández, Wilfredo Alfonso Ibáñez, Israel Rodríguez Lima, and Erasmo Machín García, four CIA agents infiltrated into Cuba for subversive and espionage activities, were captured and brought to trial. Guns, pistols, ammunition, and letters written in invisible ink were taken from them. The CIA had given them the task of locating coastal areas suitable for landing arms.

**November 14:** The United States began installing a powerful 1,000-kilowatt anti-Cuba broadcasting station in Paraíso, Cartago province, Costa Rica, with the objective of waging psychological warfare on Cuba. The radio plant was controlled by the CIA and was additionally responsible for interfering with Radio Havana Cuba and Radio Moscow programs. It was to be inaugurated in January of the following year, at an initial cost of \$4.5 million.

**November 15:** The band of Máximo Álvarez Concepción, alias El Pinto, was dismantled after an ambush by the security forces. Three of its members were killed during the confrontation.

**November 19:** The body of militiaman Luis Cardoso Miranda was discovered in Caracusey, Trinidad municipality, Las Villas province. Cardoso had been kidnapped on November 7 by Máximo Álvarez Concepción’s band.

**November 20:** The US Defense Department announced that the wreckage of a disappeared U-2 aircraft had been found in waters 40 miles northeast of Key West at a depth of 30 meters. This aircraft had been brought down by the Cuban anti-aircraft defense unit after undertaking espionage missions over Cuba.

**November 22:** President John Fitzgerald Kennedy was assassinated in Dallas, Texas.

A CIA officer met with Rolando Cubela in Paris and tried to give him



a ballpoint pen fitted with a poison needle with which to assassinate Fidel Castro. On being informed by telephone of Kennedy's assassination, the officer suspended the interview and told his agent to wait for instructions while he traveled to Washington.

Lee Harvey Oswald was detained in Dallas, initially charged with the murder of policeman J. Tippit.

**November 23:** On Cuban national television, Fidel Castro presented his analysis of the motives for and possible perpetrators of the assassination of President Kennedy.

**November 24:** Lee Harvey Oswald was killed by Jack Ruby in a Dallas police station while being transferred to Condado prison.

**November 25:** The Cuban foreign minister rejected the provocative accusation that the revolutionary government was involved in the assassination of President Kennedy.

**November 27:** Letters from Cuba addressed to Oswald began to arrive in the United States, in an attempt to link him with the Cuban security services.

**November 28:** Venezuelan President Rómulo Betancourt decided to take the case of an alleged Cuban "intervention in internal politics and aggression" to the OAS Council, according to Marcos Falcón Briceño, his foreign minister. The Venezuelan Foreign Ministry instructed Pedro Zuloaga, its UN representative, to inform the Security Council of alleged "Cuban intervention" in Venezuela.

A group of counterrevolutionaries tried to assault Cuba House, an organization sympathetic to the Cuban revolution in Columbus Avenue, New York. Around 15 armed assailants who arrived in three cars at approximately 5:30 a.m. managed to open the main door and one of the windows using an iron bar, and then entered the building and caused damage to the ground floor. On realizing that people on the upper floor had called the police, they decided to leave.

Six members of the US Nazi Party, sporting brown uniforms and armbands with swastikas, and six Cubans from the so-called Emergency

Committee to Contain Castro, paraded in front of the White House to demand the immediate invasion of Cuba. The two groups had previously organized small demonstrations to attack President Kennedy for not having eliminated Castro and the Cuban revolution. There was no police intervention.

**December:** A CIA network made up of Bernardo Lucas Milanés, Roberto Caíñas Milanés, Adela Nagle, Loreto Llanes García, and others, planned an assassination attempt on Fidel Castro during a visit to the Potín café on Línea and Paseo in Vedado, Havana. The plot was to intercept the leader's fleet of cars when they stopped and to open fire on them with automatic weapons. After several weeks of surveillance, the operation was abandoned when Fidel Castro failed to show up.

The ELN planned an attack on Fidel Castro during a public event at the University of Havana. The idea was to concentrate a group close to the podium from early on, and when the Cuban leader arrived, to throw hand grenades at him. Roberto Ortega, Ciro Rey, and José Águila were arrested.

**December 1:** Nine armed Cuban counterrevolutionaries were captured by a British frigate on Cayo Sal, an islet in the Bahamas near Cuba. Their vessel containing light arms and a large quantity of munitions was taken, as well as an arms cache hidden on the coast of the cay.

**December 2:** Cuban Foreign Minister Raúl Roa García issued a statement rejecting accusations that Cuba had sent arms to Venezuelan guerrillas combating the corrupt regime of Rómulo Betancourt.

At the same time, he categorically stated that these arms had been sent by the CIA in complicity with the Venezuelan president, to provide a pretext for attacking the Cuban revolution. At an OAS session, Rómulo Betancourt's representative, Enrique Tejera París, once again called for armed aggression against Cuba, preceded by the breaking off of diplomatic and commercial relations.

**December 3:** The OAS agreed to an initial maneuver against Cuba by appointing a consultative body in accordance with the Inter-American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance, and forming a committee

to “investigate” the seizure of arms which had allegedly originated from Cuba.

**December 4:** The committee formed by the OAS council met in a secret session to discuss the claim by the Rómulo Betancourt regime of an alleged Cuban arms dispatch to Venezuela. The committee was composed of Colombia, Argentina, Uruguay, Costa Rica, and the United States.

**December 5:** The Brazilian Nationalist Parliamentary Front (FPN) alerted the country to maneuvers by right-wing sectors designed to achieve the rupture of relations between Brazil and Cuba by taking advantage of the charge against Cuba presented by Venezuela at the OAS.

**December 12:** The DSE captured counterrevolutionary leader Pedro C. Sánchez Figueredo and dismantled his band.

**December 13:** The Standing Group of the NSC met to discuss measures to increase pressure on Cuba. These included reconnaissance flights at low level and military maneuvers to ensure the Cuban defense forces maintained a state of alert.

**December 16:** Militiamen Antonio García Olivera and Lino Salabarría Díaz died in a confrontation with bandits in the Escambray, Las Villas province.

In a clash between the revolutionary forces and the 20-strong group of Ramón del Sol Sorí, alias Ramoncito, two of his men, Narciso del Sol and Felipe Silva, were killed, and others were injured.

**December 22:** MINFAR announced that CIA agents had sunk a Cuban navy torpedo launch moored at a pier in the Bay of Sigüanea, south of the Isle of Pines. Three young Cuban marines were killed and 18 injured. Another mine was found 300 meters from the dock where the launch was sabotaged, at the entrance of the access channel, three feet below the surface of the water and secured by cables from underneath.

**December 25:** The band headed by Pedro González Sánchez burned some boats in Tropezón, Trinidad, Las Villas province.

## Appendix 3

### Cuban exiles investigated in relation to the assassination of President John F. Kennedy

Aguado, Miguel	Calderón Corralero, Luisa
Aguilar, Manuel	Canette de Céspedes, Ricardo
Aguilera, Leopoldo, Jr.	Cantín, Luis
Alba, Adrián	Carballo, Roberto
Alba, Celio	Carrillo, Justo
Alemán, José	Castellanos, Néstor o Ernesto
Alonso Pujol, Guillermo	Castro, Celio Sergio
Álvarez, Secundino	Cisneros, Rogelio ("Eugenio")
Ángel	Cobos, Arturo
Arcacha Smith, Sergio	Cruz, Miguel
Artime Buesa, Manuel	Cubela Secades, Rolando
Balbuena Calzadilla, Luis	Cuesta Valle, Antonio
Bermúdez, Mario	Díaz García, Herminio
Bartes, Frank	Díaz, Higinio ("Nino")
Basalto, José	Díaz Lanz, Marcos
Benavides, Domingo	Díaz Lanz, Pedro Luis
Blanco, César	Diego, Felipe
Blanco Fernández, Juan Francisco	Duque, Evelio
Borja Simo, Isidro ("Chilo")	Echevarría, Homero
Bosch Ávila, Orlando	Espinosa Hernández, Víctor
Bosch, José ("Pepín")	Estrada, Pedro
Bringuier, Carlos	Feliafel, Anis

Fernández, Alberto	María del Carmen
Fernández, Fernando	Masferrer Rojas, Rolando
Fernández, Julio	Martínez, Jorge
Font, Ramón	Martínez, Rolando
García Cárdenas, Juan	Martínez Pinillos, Joaquín
García, Inés	Martínez Pupo, Rafael
García, Julio	Mas Canosa, Jorge
García Kohly, Mario	Mir, Alfredo
Goicoechea Sánchez, Fermín de	Miró Cardona, José
González, Alonso	Montero Carrazana, Luis
González, Antonio	Morales Navarrete, Ricardo
González, Hirán	Nazario Sargén, Andrés
González, Pedro	Novo Sampol, Guillermo
González, Reynold	Novo Sampol, Ignacio
González, Virgilio	Núñez Portuondo, Emilio
González Gallarreta, José Luis	Odio, Amador
Guitart, Agustín	Odio, Annie
Gutiérrez, Pedro	Odio, Sara
Gutiérrez Luján, Daniel	Odio, Silvia
Gutiérrez Menoyo, Eloy	Orizondo, Ciro
Hernández, Celso	Ortiz, Oscar
Hernández, Pablo	Osanto
Iglesias, Antonio	Otero, Rolando
Iglesias, Guillermo	Paneque, Víctor Manuel
Insua, Marcela	Paz, Virgilio
Juárez, José	Peláez, Rolando
Lanuzza, José A.	Pena, Orestes
Lazo, Mario	Penabaz, Fernando
Lines García	Peña, Lucilo
López, Gilberto Policarpo	Pérez, Eduardo
López, Humberto	Pérez, Sergio
López Estrada, Armando	Pérez San Román, José
Lozano Pino, Manuel	Piedra Negueruela, Orlando
Maceo, Antonio	Pino, Rafael del

Posada Carriles, Luis	Valle Gutiérrez, Eladio del
Postal, Julia	Varona, Manuel Antonio de
Prío Socarrás, Antonio	Veciana Blanch, Antonio L. Carlos
Prío Socarrás, Carlos	Velázquez, Víctor
Prío Socarrás, Francisco	Vidal Santiago, Felipe
Quintero, Rafael	Villafaña, Manuel
Quiroga, Carlos	Villaverde, Rafael
Rabel Núñez, Luis	Villaverde, Raúl
Ramírez Ortiz, Antulio	Yanes Pelletier, Jesús
Ray Rivero, Manuel o "Manolo"	
Restoy, Juan	
Rivero, Felipe	
Rivero Caro, Adolfo Emilio	
Roca, Carlos	
Rodríguez, Ernesto o Arnesto	
Rodríguez, Evaristo	
Rodríguez Mendigutía, Félix	
Rodríguez, Miguel	
Rodríguez Molina, Rafael Anselmo	
Rodríguez Oscarberro, Manuel	
Ross Díaz, Alvin	
Ruiz, William o Guillermo	
Salazar, Jorge	
Salvat, Juan Manuel	
San Román, Roberto	
Sanjenís, Joaquín	
Sanjenís, Sergio	
Serrano, Héctor	
Sierra Martínez, Paulino	
Silva Clarens, Francisco	
Suárez, José Dionisio	
Torres, Miguel	
Valdés, René	
Vale, Roberto	

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